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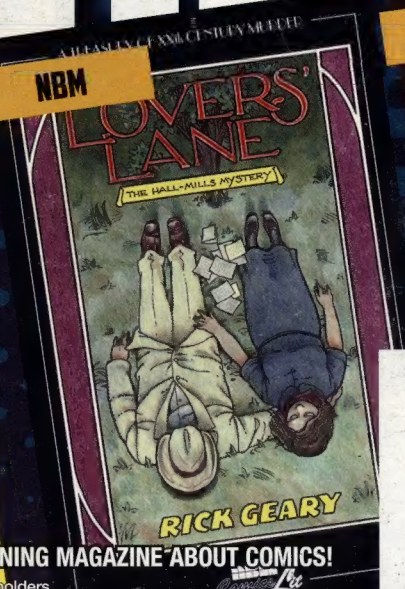

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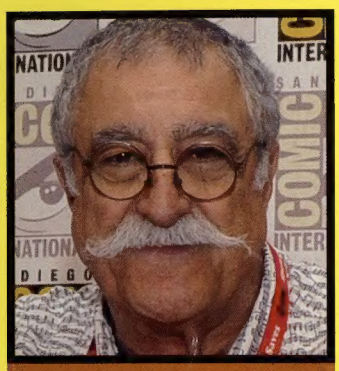

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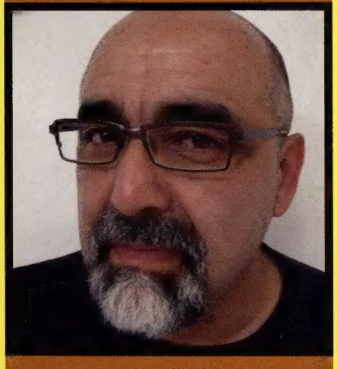

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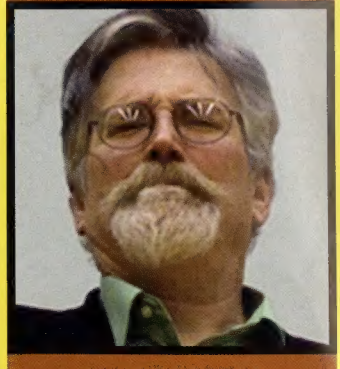

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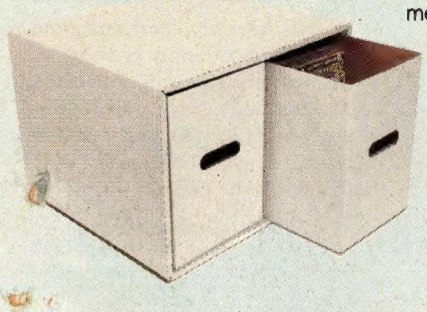

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FROM THE EDITOR

No, you're not seeing double with two of the listings in our contents at right. Last issue's Favorite Finds caused reshuffling, and, in the chaos, both *For Art's Sake* and *Full Frontal Nerdity* found themselves shuffled right out of the issue. We're making up for that this month with a double-dose of each. Hot dog!

Speaking of bonuses, Captain Comics has gone all-out this month with his survey of comics publishers about upcoming releases and plans. Though it was originally scheduled as a "summer" preview, we've learned about some treats headed our way into the fall, as well. And it's not just the big publishers. A number of companies went on at length about their plans, demonstrating clearly that the industry continues moving and shaking. Check it out, beginning on Page 6.

Of course, there'll be *more* moving and shaking in just a couple of weeks (as this is written) with Comic-Con International: San Diego at the San Diego Convention Center July 11-15. (Let us go on the record now that we trust that all the moving and shaking will come from announcements, deal-making, and networking, *not* natural events.)

CBG Senior Editor Maggie Thompson will be there. So will ***CBG*** reviewer Jim Johnson. And both will be toting cameras around to the vast assortment of events San Diego always provides. Expect to see some great shots in our scrapbook next issue. While I don't get to attend this year's show (*someone* has to hold the fort in Iola), I plan to provide daily coverage on ***CBGXtra.com*** including links to Maggie's website for her show diary, so visit our site early and often. And say, "Hi!" to Maggie and Jim if you see them there!

I *am* planning to attend the Chicago Comic Con in early August, so perhaps I'll run into many of you there, as I roam the floor.

What are *your* summer convention plans and experiences? Let us know with an email to *ohso@krause.com*, a letter to *Oh, So?*, ***CBG*** Editorial Dept., 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54945, or via email directly to me. (In the latter case, please let me know if it's OK to run your letter in print.)

— Brent Frankenhoff
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CBG #1693 September 2012
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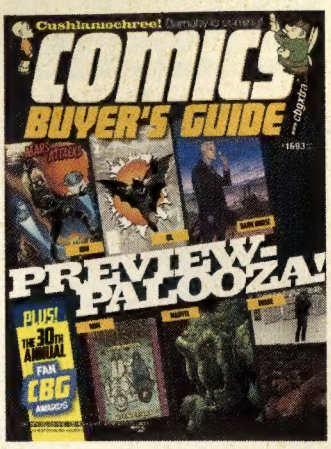

It *is* a Previewpalooza this month, as publishers not only provided a peek into the virtues of projects already under way, but also hinted about what's coming in the fall. We thank all who participated in our look behind the curtain.

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- **Comic-Con Scrapbook!** Join us to see some of the magic moments of this year's San Diego extravaganza!

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PREVIEW-PALOOZA!

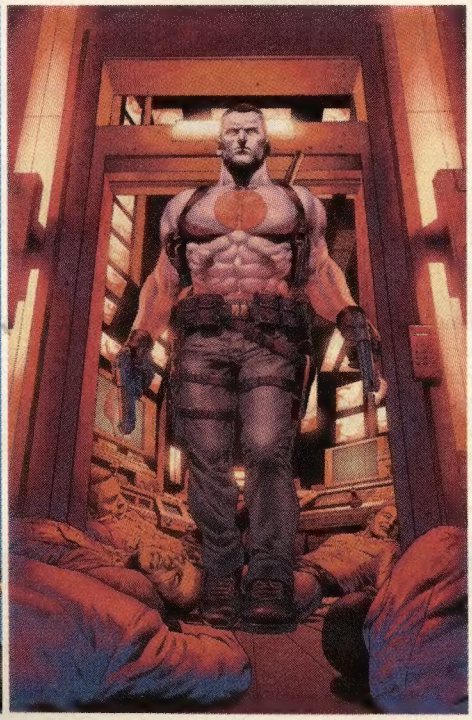
by **ANDREW "CAPTAIN COMICS" SMITH**

2012 has been a pretty good year so far in comics. But what's coming in the next few months may put what's come before in the shade. A number of publishers were enthusiastic enough to answer our call for a roundup, so here we go ...

VALIANT

Perhaps the feel-good story of the year is the return of Valiant. Launching in May with *X-O Manowar* #1 — which is on its third printing — the new/old publisher has continued with one new title per month through the summer plus a guest star in September.

A new version of *Harbinger* already made its debut in June; it's by Joshua Dysart and Khari Evans. And *Bloodshot* by Duane Swierczynski, Manuel Garcia, and Arturo Lozzi begins in July, with the lethal protagonist trying to figure which of the voices in his head is his own.



Valiant's revival includes (left to right): *Archer & Armstrong*, *Bloodshot*, and *X-O Manowar*.

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Valiant Executive Editor Warren Simons told ***CBG***, "*Bloodshot* #2 ships in August and it might as well come with a fuse. It's quite possibly the most action-packed comic I've ever edited. But it's not all about exploding planes and gunfire and corrupt agencies hunting a hero who's hunting himself. Duane Swierczynski has added a brilliant wrinkle to Bloodshot's powers, something that is visualized wonderfully in the issue. And the action by Manuel Garcia is beautiful and kinetic and something that only comes together when the guys are putting their hearts into the project. I went over the book again last night and can't wait for it to ship. Keep matches away from this one."

Next, August brings the welcome return of *Archer & Armstrong*, this time by writer Fred Van Lente, who told ***CBG***, "Archer and Armstrong don't meet until about three-quarters through the first issue of the book named after them, and that meeting is what I'm most looking forward to. We're taking time and care in establishing these characters — the martial arts master raised on a fundamentalist compound and the immortal strongman from the ancient city-state of Ur — and they're not going to like each other at first, just because that's the convention of the buddy genre. Opposites don't always attract. Instead, we're going to take the time to build this relationship and show how it's one of the best in comics history and one of the things Valiant fans remember so fondly about the original line."

That September guest-star I mentioned is fan-favorite Ninjak, in *X-O Manowar* #5, which writer Robert Venditti described for ***CBG*** as, "a pivotal issue for Aric. Having finally escaped The Vine's slave pens, he'll return to Earth only to discover that everything he has ever known — everything he fought so hard to get back to — is gone. But he'll also learn that a whole host of new adversaries exists, and they're far more formidable than anything he has faced before. For anyone who has been wanting to pick up the series but has been unable to track down the earlier issues, this will be the place to jump in."

ARCHIE

Some old friends are returning at Archie, where the original MLJ super-heroes have reappeared under the traditional "Red Circle" banner. *New Crusaders* began online May 16, with six new pages posted each week for subscribers. It's by writer Ian Flynn (*Sonic the Hedgehog*) and artist Ben Bates, whom Editor Paul Kaminski described as "our best guys on our top book."

This new incarnation of the former "Mighty Crusaders" has allowed the original characters to age normally and will feature their children and protégés, including new versions of Comet, Fireball, Fly-Girl, Jaguar, Steel Sterling, and The Web (all led by the aged, but still formidable, original Shield). The title moves into print with *New Crusaders: Rise of the Heroes* #1 in August.

Not that the regular Archie line is standing still. The Occupy Movement hits Riverdale in *Archie* #635 (in July), with a lovely variant cover by Jill Thompson (*Scary Godmother*). Jaws should drop for *Archie* #636 the next month, when Sabrina's magical cat Salem gives Archie, Betty, and Veronica a sex change. I am not making this up.

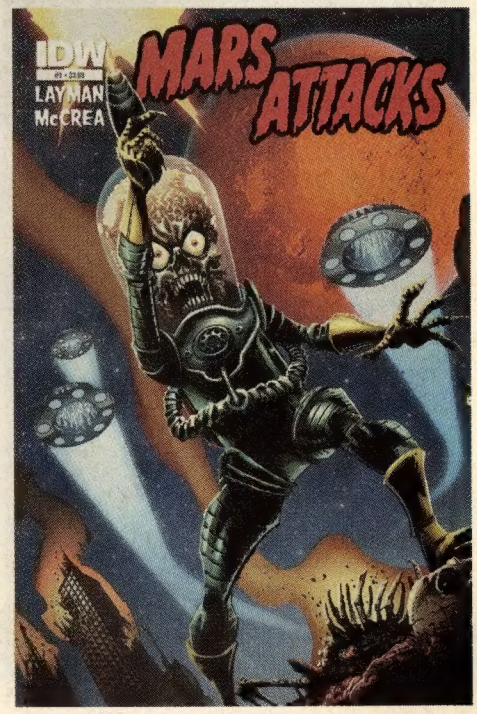
Dan Parent also recently announced that George Takei will make an appearance in *Kevin Keller* later this year.

But perhaps the best Archie product this summer won't be from Archie at all — *Archie Archives Vol. 6* arrives in August from Dark Horse, featuring stories from 1946.

IDW

IDW has emerged as one of the Top Five publishers, and 2012 is a good demonstration of the reasons for that. Among its many upcoming offerings, fans can look forward to *The Crow* #1 in July (with a story related to the upcoming movie) and *Star Trek: The Next Generation: Hive* #1 in September (featuring Hugo Award-winner Brannon Braga).

And Chief Creative Officer/Editor in Chief Chris Ryall told ***CBG*** that there's so much more with so much enthusiasm that I'm simply going to get out of the way and let him talk:



***Mars Attacks* (June):** "Every now and then, a creative team fits so perfectly on a licensed title that it's hard to envision anyone else doing as much justice to that book. John Layman and John McCrea are exactly that team here, absolutely nailing the bleak humor, carnage, and insane personalities a book like this needs to succeed."

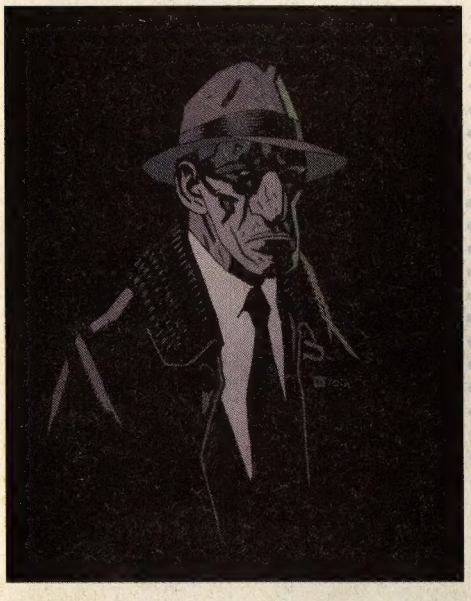
***Rocketeer: Cargo of Doom* (July):** "Mark Waid and Chris Samnee are applying their many strengths to a wonderful Rocketeer tale. This is the first feature-length Rocketeer story

we've done, and this team not only does great comics, they also nail the adventure-serial feel of Dave Stevens' classic strip."

***Godzilla: Half-Century War* (August):** " 'Tour de force' gets overused at times, but, in this case, since James Stokoe is writing, penciling, inking, coloring, and lettering this entire mini-series, it's as apt as can be. And anyone who's seen his insanely detailed work knows that this one's going to be something special."

***Doctor Who* (September):** "Andy Diggle and Mark Buckingham, both guys I always wanted to work with for more than just the one-off cover or script, are re-launching the good Doctor's series, so you know it's not only in the hands of guys who know the character inside and out, but they are also two of the more exciting, talented guys working in comics today. As good as the covers for the book will be, to paraphrase the description of the TARDIS, this one is 'even better on the inside.' "

Dark Horse's upcoming comics include (top to bottom, below): *The Creep* by John Arcudi and *The Victories* by Michael Avon



DARK HORSE

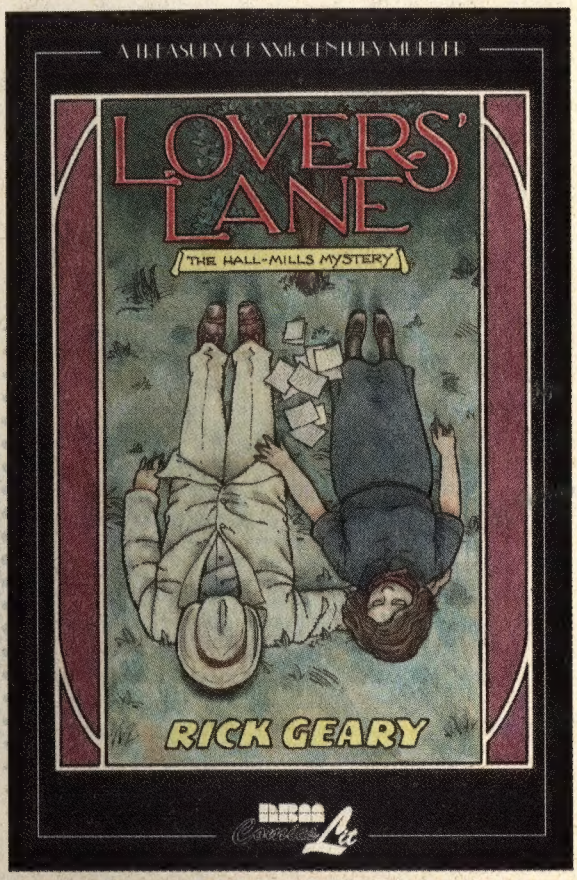
Dark Horse Senior Managing Editor Scott Allie told ***CBG***, "I've got a lot of stuff coming this summer than I'm kind of in love with. *The Creep* from John Arcudi is something I've wanted to publish for a long time, and I was really pleased that Mike Richardson and I were able to talk John into bring back his old *Dark Horse Presents* character." That character strongly resembles Rondo Hatton, the actor who turned his disfiguring acromegaly into a movie career. *The Creep* is a four-issue mini-series beginning with a #0 issue in August with a cover by Frank Miller — followed by #1 in September with a cover by Mike Mignola.

Michael Avon Oeming's *The Victories*, a five-issue mini-series beginning in August, "is the sickest, craziest super-hero comic in a long time," Allie continued. "The last time I got excited about a super-hero comic was *Umbrella Academy*, and this could not be more different than that, but it's *fun*.

"We're also making Eric Powell's *The Goon* monthly again, which is like our greatest possible gift to humanity.

"Eric's doing his best work ever on the title: really beautifully drawn and great, unforgettable stories.

"And, spinning out of the Whedonverse, we have a new *Spike* series, by Victor Gischler and Paul Lee, which digs into the character in a way we've never been able to do in the comics. I'm really proud of that one. Victor and Paul have become a surprisingly great team."



NBM

Meanwhile, NBM has already scored this year with P. Craig Russell's eye-popping *The Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde Vol. 5: The Happy Prince*. But it's not done yet.

NBM Publicist Stefan Blitz told ***CBG***, "NBM releases a small, but very select, number of titles, so it really isn't difficult to get enthusiastic about all of them." But he did pick out three in particular that excited him.

"The first is *Lovers' Lane: The Hall-Mills Mystery*, the latest volume in our *Treasury of XXth Century Murder* series by the inimitable Rick Geary. I'm a sucker for true-crime stories, and a new volume from Rick is always worth celebrating." The book is scheduled to ship in August.

"The other two books are from two cartoonists doing their first work with NBM," Blitz said. "*Taxes, The Tea Party, and those Revolting Rebels: A Comics History of the American Revolution* by Stan Mack is a wonderfully executed, funny, and informative look at the birth of our nation. And Margreet de Heer's *Philosophy: A Discovery in Comics* is a charming and extremely accessible examination of the history of Western philosophy through both famous thinkers and their doctrines. Each of them is truly a special labor of love."

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ONI

Oni's editors said they're proud of their upcoming releases — especially *Crogan's Loyalty* in June and *Guerillas Vol. 2* and *Xoc: The Journey of a Great White* in July — and aren't afraid to show it.

Editor in Chief James Lucas Jones told **CBG**, "The third book in Chris Schweizer's historical adventure series, *Crogan's Loyalty*, might be my favorite thing from Professor Schweizer yet. Yes, it shares the same painstaking attention to detail and historical accuracy with Chris's other *Crogan* tomes, but the sibling rivalry between two brothers fighting on opposites sides of the American Revolution adds a familial element that's new fodder for Chris' always engaging characters."

Editor Charlie Chu told **CBG**, "*Guerillas Volume 2* is the second in Brahm Revel's trilogy about jungle combat at the height of the Vietnam War. Not only is Brahm one of the best cartoonists and storytellers in all of comics, this is a no-holds-barred story about attack chimps with machine guns. What's not to love?"

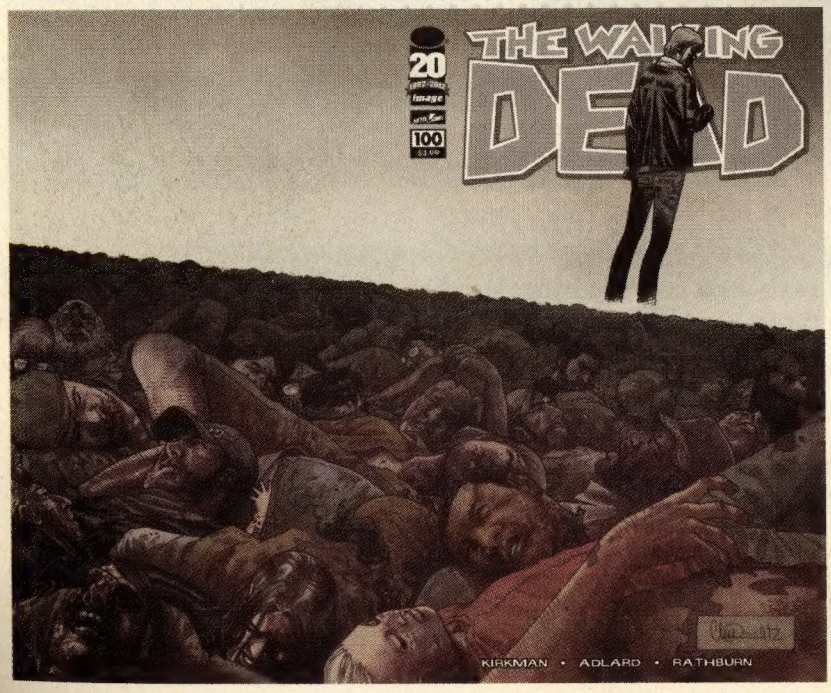
Editor Jill Beaton told **CBG**, "As an avid shark enthusiast, I was excited to work with Matt Dembicki on his book *Xoc: The Journey of a Great White*. With equal parts narrative and environmental message woven into a single compelling story, *Xoc* highlights both the instincts that have served the shark population for thousands of years and the current dangers they face from human encroachment on the seas. A great book and a call to action!"

I'd be remiss, if I didn't mention *The Walking Dead* #100, which arrives in July.

IMAGE

Image is another publisher that seems to be exploding with new titles, new ideas and new creators. Once again, I'm going to shut up and let someone else talk — in this case, PR and Marketing Director Jennifer de Guzman:

***Creator Owned Heroes* (by Steve Niles, Jimmy Palmiotti, Justin Gray, Phil Noto, and Kevin Mellon, in June):** "The *COH* team is celebrating the spirit of independent comics with original stories and great art, as well as articles and interviews. With the boom in creator-owned comics that we've seen this year, this is the perfect series to let readers know what independent comics are all about."



***The Red Diary/The Re[a]d Diary* (July):** "I think sometimes people can forget that comics is a medium capable of experimentation and innovation, but Steven T. Seagle is not one of those people. When he saw a French-language graphic novel by his frequent collaborator Teddy Kristiansen, he didn't wait for an English translation; he wrote his *own* dialogue and narrative, creating a new story with Kristiansen's sequential art. Paired with the *actual* translation, Seagle's 'remix' offers a startling example of how the same image can evoke very different meanings, while still maintaining the same core themes. In the case of *The Red Diary/ The Re[a]d Diary*, those themes are art, mortality, and identity."

***Fatale Volume One: Death Chases Me* (June):** "Beautiful, haunting work by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips offers a horror-bent version of the *noir* genre and a complex and human — but also *in*human — *femme fatale* who pushes the confines of her archetype. This first volume is set in 1950s San Francisco, with all the atmosphere that setting conjures."

***It Girl and the Atomics* (August):** "A spin-off of Mike Allred's *Madman*, *It Girl* is series about a comics super-heroine whose power to take on the properties of anything she touches makes her a formidable foe of any baddies lurking in Snap City — or she will be once she figures out the whole crime-fighting thing! Jamie S. Rich and Mike Norton are a perfect team, matching witty writing with top-notch, fun art."

I'd be remiss, if I didn't mention *The Walking Dead* #100, which arrives in July. Early reports indicate that orders for the issue — which has nine variant covers — may be over 300,000.

Finally, several publishers didn't make our deadline, but that's no reason to leave 'em out — especially since they include The Big Two!

DC

June saw the debut of the controversial "Before Watchmen" project, but, with the names attached — such creators as Brian Azzarello, Amanda Conner, Darwyn Cooke, and J. Michael Straczynski — it's obvious these titles are meant to be the best DC can do. That's reason enough for most fans to check out *The Comedian, Dr. Manhattan, Minutemen,*

Nite Owl, Ozymandias, Rorschach, and *Silk Spectre.* They're bound to be the topic of many discussions for the rest of the year.

DC also revives concepts with the new *National Comics* beginning in July. A new Phantom Lady (with Doll Man) will make her debut in August. And *The Judas Coin* HC will be released in September. In *National Comics,* each stand-alone issue will feature a new take on one or more characters, beginning with Kid Eternity (July), Looker (August), and Rose

& Thorn (September). In the six stories contained in *The Judas Coin,* Walt Simonson follows one of the 30 pieces of silver paid to Judas. Those tales involve characters from DC's past (Golden Gladiator, Viking Prince, Captain Fear, Bat Lash), present (Two-Face), and future (Manhunter 2070).

But DC's biggest news is a "zero month" for "The New 52" titles in September. Each issue will be numbered #0 and feature tales from the title character's — or characters' — pasts. But some will be final issues, and they will be replaced by four new titles. Look for *Phantom Stranger, Sword of Sorcery* (starring Amethyst and Beowulf), *Talon* (from the "Court of Owls" in *Batman*), and *Team Seven* (Cole Cash, Alex Fairchild, Dinah Lance, John Lynch, Steve Trevor, Amanda Waller, and Slade Wilson).

DYNAMITE

Dynamite is another publisher that seems to have an avalanche of new titles every month. This summer will be no exception.

June saw the beginning of the company's first crossover; *Prophecy* will somehow team up such characters as Athena, Dracula, Dorian Gray, Pantha, Purgatory, Allan Quatermain, The Reanimator, and Vampirella. (If you're wondering where Pantha came from, her new solo series also began in June.)

And while July is fairly quiet on the Dynamite front, August is replete with new titles. Look for a revival of Frank Frazetta's *Thun'da,* a title called *Damsels* (which has the same premise as Vertigo's *Fairest*), and a *Dark Shadows/Vampirella* mini-series.

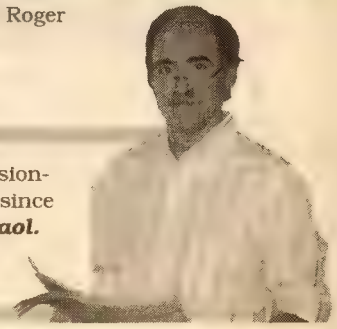
MARVEL

The big news at Marvel continues to be its blockbuster crossover *Avengers vs. X-Men,* scheduled to conclude in September. But even with "AvX" tying up most of the major titles, Marvel has other surprises up its collective sleeve.

For example, July will see a number of new titles, including *Captain Marvel* #1 (arising from *AvX*), *Hit-Girl* #1 (of five issues), *Infernal Man-Thing* #1 (of three), *Powers: FBI* #1, *X-Treme X-Men* #1 (starring Dazzler and three familiar X-Men from another dimension), and the so-weird-it-must-be-good *Space Punisher* #1 (of four). Oh, and Sabretooth returns in *Wolverine* #310, because I suppose he must.

August brings another bunch of new starts, including *First X-Men* #1 by Neal Adams (starring Logan and Sabretooth), the inexplicable *Gambit* #1, and the inevitable *Hawkeye* #1 (by Matt Fraction and David Aja).

August is also Spider-Man's 50th anniversary, which will not only be celebrated in the king-sized *Amazing Spider-Man* #692, but also in "continuations" of long-discontinued Spider-titles, such as *Peter Parker, Spider-Man* #156.1, *Sensational Spider-Man* #33.1 and #33.2, and *Web of Spider-Man* #129.1 and #129.2. Look for such fabled Spider-names as Roger Stern and Tom DeFalco to contribute.



ANDREW SMITH, has been writing professionally about comics since 1992 and for ***CBG*** since 2000. He can be reached at ***capncomics@aol.com*** or on his website, ***http://captaincomics.ning.com.***

The 2012 FAN CBG AWARDS

And the favorites are ...

The votes are in and you, the fans, have determined your favorite creators and projects of 2011 (highlighted in bold in each category) in our 30th annual Fan Awards. A nominating round earlier in the year determined the top five nominees in each category, including our two new categories, and the resulting ballot went online and in ***CBG*** #1690. As you'll see, the voting was close in many cases, indicating that every creator and every project was *somebody's* favorite. (Only projects with a 2011 copyright date and creators who had work published with a 2011 copyright date were eligible for consideration.) So, without further ado ...

FAVORITE COMIC BOOK SERIES

31.03%
***Daredevil* (Marvel)**

27.44%
Justice League (DC)

17.84%
Ghostbusters (IDW)

11.99%
War of the Independents (Red Anvil)

11.69%
A Child Is Born (Apostle Arts)

FAVORITE ORIGINAL GRAPHIC NOVEL

28.93%
***Batman: Noel* (DC)**

25.35%
League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Century: 1969 (Top Shelf)

22.08%
Teen Titans: Games (DC)

14.93%
Parker: The Outfit (IDW)

8.71%
Habibi (Pantheon)

FAVORITE STORY

28.82%
"*Flashpoint*"
***Flashpoint* #1-5 plus tie-ins (DC)**

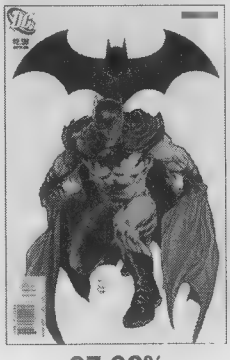
Untitled story *Ghostbusters* #1-4 (IDW) **21.18%**

"Meet Kevin Keller" *Veronica* #207 aka *Kevin Keller (mini-series)* #1 (Archie) **18.07%**

"War of the Independents" *War of the Independents* #1-2 (Red Anvil) **17.45%**

"A Child Is Born" *A Child Is Born* (Apostle Arts) **14.49%**

FAVORITE CHARACTER



37.92%
Batman

Spider-Man **25.28%**

Captain America..... **17.13%**

Superman..... **13.06%**

Kevin Keller..... **6.60%**

FAVORITE WEBCOMIC

32.15%
Girl Genius
(http://www.girlgeniusonline.com)

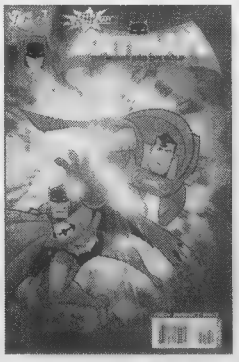
Punching the Clock (http://www.punching-the-clock.com) .. **28.09%**

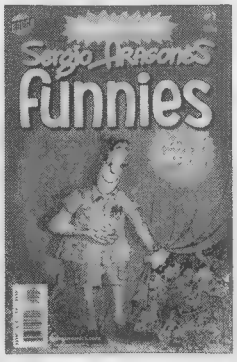
The Hero Business (http://www.theherobiz.com)..... **18.95%**

Zom-Ben Strikes (http://zombenstrikes.com) **12.01%**

Arteest (http://arteestcomics.com) **8.80%**

FAN CBG AWARDS





FAVORITE COMIC BOOK OR GRAPHIC NOVEL FOR KIDS (TIE)

29.36%
All-New Batman: The Brave and the Bold

29.36%
Sergio Aragonés' Funnies

Tiny Titans 20.34%
Dorothy & the Wizard in Oz 15.44%
Snarked! 5.50%

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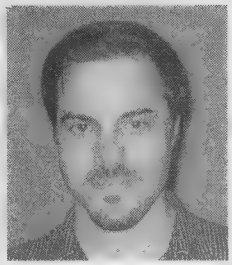

33.38%
Geoff Johns

Scott Snyder **20.92%**
Bill Willingham **20.03%**
Dave Ryan **13.35%**
Erik Burnham **12.31%**

FAVORITE PENCILLER

34.88%
Sergio Aragonés

Jim Lee **30.38%**
Billy Tucci **16.60%**
Dave Ryan **9.85%**
Dan Schoening **8.30%**

FAVORITE INKER

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Scott Williams **25.62%**
Mark McKenna **16.25%**
Dave Ryan **12.45%**
Tim Townsend **11.57%**

FAVORITE COLORIST

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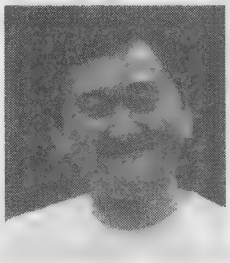
Tom Luth 20.60%
Luis Antonio Delgado 18.87%
Paul Mounts 18.24%
Donna Gregory 11.79%

FAVORITE LETTERER



28.74%
Stan Sakai

Richard Starkings & Comicraft **25.60%**
Todd Klein **23.35%**
Wilson Ramos Jr. **15.12%**
Bill Tortolini **7.19%**

FAVORITE COVER ARTIST

33.57%
Alex Ross

Adam Hughes **26.66%**
Michael Golden **16.14%**
Billy Tucci **13.83%**
Tristan Jones **9.80%**

FAVORITE EDITOR

48.03%
Jim Salicrup

Tom Brevoort **21.31%**
Tom Waltz **11.97%**
Joey Cavalieri **11.24%**
Mike Marts **7.45%**

FAVORITE PUBLISHER (TIE)

27.96% **DC**
27.96% **Marvel**

IDW 18.22%
Dark Horse 17.66%
Image 8.21%

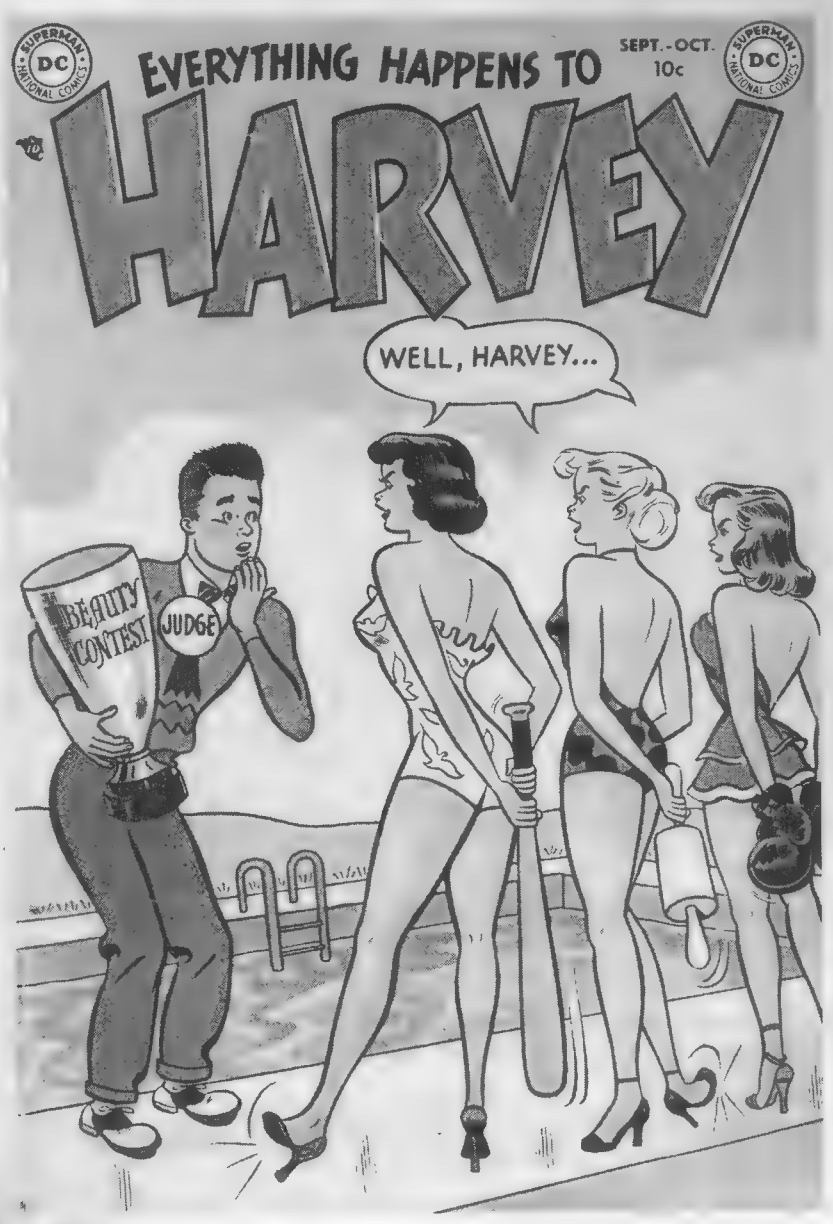
DC's most obscure 1950s title

Everything didn't happen to Harvey

by **MICHELLE NOLAN**

In the pantheon of DC characters with their own titles, probably none is more obscure than Harvey Payne.

There were non-licensed, original characters who appeared in fewer issues of their own title — such as *Melody Lane*. But hapless Harvey — as funny as he was, just a superb example of four-color slapstick on the high-school scene — was among DC's few flops during a creative explosion of non-super-hero titles in the 1950-1953 era.



By mid-1953, DC was publishing some 42 regular titles — more than the firm published at any time in the 1940s — although the ever-busy folks then ensconced at 480 Lexington Avenue in New York declined to acknowledge *Girls' Love Stories*, *Girls' Romances*, and *Secret Hearts* on the list of titles regularly advertised.

In fact, you could win a bet with almost anyone by asking this question: *What genre led the way for DC in the immediate post-Golden Age?*

The answer: Humor, humor, and more humor, divided among titles devoted to teenagers, funny animals, and the licensed likes of Bob Hope and the then-wacky duo of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. When *Everything Happens to Harvey* #1 (Oct 53) hit the stands, DC listed 18 humor titles! I would bet that only the most fanatic DC collectors — ahem! — could tell you to what degree high jinks prevailed over heroics.

There was not nearly enough time, however, for everything to happen to Harvey. DC introduced only two new titles in 1953 — the other was the charming children's comic *Peter Panda* — but Harvey Payne and his crazy antics lasted only seven issues. It's a pity, because Bob Oksner, one of DC's master humorists, provided gorgeous covers and sweet art.

Harvey was doubtless partly the outcome of the burgeoning early 1950s success of teen humor titles from Archie and Atlas, which were by far the largest purveyors of the genre among several other companies.

Both *Everything Happens to Harvey* and *Peter Panda* were also the result of DC's sensitivity to an ever-increasing onslaught of criticism about crime and horror comics, even though DC never really published a genuine pre-Comics Code horror comic. (There was always a logical explanation for every weird story.)

When DC converted *Sensation Comics* (stranding Wonder Woman in her own title only) to *Sensation Mystery* in 1952, and concurrently introduced *The Phantom Stranger*, it wasn't the right time for horror —

unlike the late 1960s and early 1970s, when DC began to publish wildly successful examples of the genre.

Everything Happens to Harvey replaced *Sensation Mystery* on DC's publishing schedule, one month after *Peter Panda* #1 (Sep 53) supplanted *The Phantom Stranger*. (And if there was ever a better real-life metaphor for what was happening in the embattled comics industry, I don't know what it would be.) Oddly, DC left *Sensation Mystery* on its list of titles published in *Harvey* #1.

There was a market for weird stories, and DC knew it — how else to explain the success of *House of Mystery*, published monthly in 1953? — but it just wasn't the right time in our nation's cultural and political history to take too many chances. For example, in 1953, when the first season of *The Adventures of Superman* hit the airwaves in February (after an introduction in the Chicago market in September 1952), DC was barraged with complaints about the relatively grim nature of many of the episodes — however much we revere them today. Editor Whitney Ellsworth was dispatched to Hollywood with instructions to tone down the series.

Everything Happens to Harvey, even though it's a funny comic book, apparently did not sell. Why, I don't know, since the stories and art were every bit as good as those that appeared in the long-running *Buzzy*, *A Date with Judy*, and *Leave It to Binky*. It may have been due to the overcrowded newsstands of the period, since more comics were produced in 1952 and 1953 (a little more than 6,000 issues!) than in any other two-year period in the first half-century of corporate comics publishing.

I do know *Everything Happens to Harvey* is a challenging set to complete. All seven issues are pictured in the *Gerber Photo-Journal*, and all are given a scarcity rating of 6 (200 to 500 issues supposedly exist). I would agree with that — these are surely uncommon comics, though I'm not sure if I could call any of them scarce.

Everything Happens to Harvey is among the few DC titles not mentioned in former DC Publisher and President Paul Levitz's magnificent *75 Years of DC Comics: The Art of Modern Mythmaking*. (If you don't have this giant book, you are missing out.) Not that I'm blaming Levitz — Harvey Payne is now simply a long-forgotten curiosity.

Even so, it's noteworthy that DC tried something different in the first three issues of *Everything Happens to Harvey* — three-part teen-humor tales. Offhand, I can't think of anyone who tried that with teen humor before 1953.

The last four issues, however, reverted to the more customary six-page stories. My guess is that younger readers, for whom the title was intended, probably reacted better to shorter stories. In 1953, DC was not yet regularly publishing three-part stories in any title, so the experiment with *Harvey* is noteworthy.

DC already had blazed a noteworthy teen-humor path with *A Date with Judy* #1 (Nov 47), which appeared six years *after* the radio show made its debut. *A Date with Judy* ran 13 years and 79 issues — and ended well after both the radio and TV shows — as the first successfully licensed teen-humor title. DC had more moderate success with the 26-issue run of *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* (1960-1964), based on the popular TV show, which in turn was based on Max Shulman's series of popular short stories.

EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO
HARVEY
WHAT HAPPENED, HARVEY? YOU'RE LATE.'
C'MON--YOU'RE HOLDING UP THE PICNIC.'
I'M SORRY, GANG, I CAN'T COME.'
CHOCOLATE FUDGE SUNDAE 50¢
MY POP'S SWINGING A BIG REAL ESTATE DEAL TONIGHT, AND HE WANTS TO IMPRESS THE BUYER-- SO I GOTTA GO OVER TO THE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY AND HIRE A BUTLER AND A MAID. MY MOM AND SIS ARE AWAY VISITING.'
A BUTLER AND A MAID! WHEEE.' SOME CLASS.' GET HIM.'
WAIT A MINUTE, HARVEY! YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO ANY EMPLOYMENT AGENCY! I COULD BE A PRETTY GOOD BUTLER.'
AND I PLAYED A MAID IN LAST YEAR'S SCHOOL PLAY--AND DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE FORGOTTEN, HARVEY.'
GEE, GANG-- I DUNNO...

Harvey Payne burst onto the scene with neither fanfare nor explanation of his background. The soda-fountain scene of the first splash page tells the reader everything. All the stories dealt with the complications that ensued between Harvey and his sexy girlfriend Sue (and she was one of the genuine glamour girls in comics, at least in the early issues).

The story in #1 might be the best, since Harvey's ever-frenetic father (real-estate salesman Chester Payne) and Harvey's ever-sensible mother (Mabel) play major roles along with Harvey's nerdy high-school journalist buddy (Blink) and Harvey's kid sister (Jennifer, aka Muffin). Chester wants to replace the high-school athletic field with an even better complex, but the kids think he's out to sell it to developers or some such evil entity, and all sorts of complications ensue.

The cover is especially cute, with Harvey forced to choose among three swim-suited beauty queens who are armed with a baseball bat, a rolling pin, and boxing gloves.

At the end of the story, Harvey's father is one of three judges, and Harvey is just a wacky, happy onlooker whose clumsiness lands him in a swimming pool with his father, who says, "I don't think everything has happened ... yet!"

The cover of #2 shows Harvey and Sue on stage in astronaut costumes — except the word "astronaut" didn't exist yet — as Sue tells him amid flying tomatoes and eggs, "Goodness, Harvey, we're being invaded by Earth Men!" It's one of the few teen-humor covers produced by any publisher in which the cover and story are totally tied together.

The 22-page gem in #3 involves the complications of a masquerade ball, Sue's embarrassment at having her baby pictures published in the newspaper, and the kidnapping of Harvey and Sue.

Harvey, unable to untie Sue after rescuing her from the kidnappers, wheels her to the party tied to a chair, and she wins the award because her "costume" is so unusual. Harvey ends the story winking at the reader while happily telling Sue, "I told you, Sue, everything happens to Harvey."

Ironically, the big (and only) house ad in the final issue of *Everything Happens to Harvey* (#7, Oct 54) is for *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen* #1 (also dated Oct 54). (DC listed it simply as *Jimmy Olsen* among 44 titles being published, including the non-acknowledged romance comics, even though the indicia gave the full title.)

DC still had 16 humor titles when *Harvey* vanished, but they were almost all on the way out. Of those 16, most lasted only three or four more years, and only *The Adventures of Bob Hope*, plus what became *The Adventures of Jerry Lewis* along with *The Fox and the Crow*, were left by 1962 along with *Dobie Gillis* and his entourage.

Harvey Payne deserved a better fate. If you don't believe me, try to find one of these seven issues and see whether everything that happens to Harvey doesn't make you laugh.

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SUPERMAN'S GIRL FRIEND
LOIS LANE
NOV. NO. 70
IT'S A CATASTROPHE FOR SUPERMAN WHEN HE'S BEWITCHED BY BATMAN'S FELINE FOE IN... "The CATWOMAN'S BLACK MAGIC!"
TURNING SUPERMAN INTO A CAT WAS MY MOST PURR-FECT CRIME, LOIS! AND NOW I'LL CHANGE YOU INTO A MOUSE!
SUPERPUSSYCAT formerly SUPERMAN
HABITAT KRYPTONITE CAGE
SPECIAL GUEST VILLAIN!... The PENGUIN

Selina Kyle updated her look a bit before tackling Superman and Batman in the pages of *Lois Lane* #70, after taking Lo out of action.

A GOOD QUESTION, LOIS! AND THE ANSWER IS...
THE CATWOMAN. SHE'S ONE OF BATMAN'S ARCH FOES... SHE ALWAYS USES CATS AS THE INSPIRATION FOR HER CRIMES!
HELLO, MISS LANE! RAJAH AND I WERE PLAYING A LITTLE CAT AND MOUSE GAME WITH YOU!

#70 (Nov 66)! She now wore a skin-tight black costume reminiscent of the TV Catwoman, with the traditional cat-cowl and green cape.

Her cunning plan involved capturing Lois, brainwashing her into being evil, and then using her to kill The Penguin, so Selina could steal his loot. Then, when the cops closed in, they'd capture Lois and never know that the *real* Catwoman had returned to crime. Another part of the plan involved Catwoman pretending to be Lois dressed up as The Catwoman and using magic to turn The Man of Steel into a cat that she then imprisoned in a green kryptonite cage.

BATMAN
featuring "The CATWOMAN'S CATNAPPING CAPER!"
WHY DOES THE CATWOMAN WANT TO STEAL CATS?
DO I HAVE YOU PURR-PLEXED, BATMAN? HA-HA!

Needless to say, a plan this cunning took two issues to unfold and required a partnership between Lois and Lana Lang and a conference with President Johnson. Ultimately, Batman and Robin led Catwoman off in bat-cuffs, and our gals freed Supes. Oops, almost forgot the ***Spoiler Warning***.

Why was it left to Mort Weisinger and Kurt Schaffenberger (along with writer Leo Dorfman) to set the style for the return of Batman's more felonious female feline foe? That's a question for the ages, all right. I have no answers for that one.

Catwoman even made an appearance in a Kellogg's Pop-Tart premium comic book before she managed to reappear in Silver Age comics after her long hiatus.

In any event, it took a full year before Catwoman returned to Batman's titles. Maybe she had to serve her jail time first, since, when she arrived on the final page of *Detective* #369 (Nov 67), she was footloose and fancy-free. Sadly, what inspired her to return was a front-page newspaper story on Batgirl's accomplishments. "Complimented By Caped Crusader," the sub-headline said. No, really.

"Looks to me like Batgirl is making a play for Batman," Catwoman erroneously surmised. "I've known Batman a lot longer than that Jill-Come-Lately! If he belongs to anybody, he belongs to The Catwoman!" Oh, boy.

She made her case a few weeks later in "Catwoman Sets Her Claws for Batman!" in *Batman* #197 (Dec 67). This time, the woman at the wheel of The Kitty Car wore a skin-tight dark green costume in some odd scalloped texture and an elaborate, pointed domino mask and light green boots and gloves. Yikes. She wielded her cat o' nine tails to capture some crooks and prove she made a better partner than Batgirl.

Batman was skeptical but willing to believe, but Batgirl was not charmed. Both crime-fighting ladies showed up at the next crime scene, and Batgirl needed Catwoman's help to corral the criminals. Batman was impressed but refused to admit

WHEN THE SMOKE OF BATTLE CLEARS...
BATGIRL HAS HAD HER DAY-- AND NIGHT, BATMAN!
COULD SHE HAVE HELPED YOU--AS I DID?
9 CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

Our favorite cat burglar radically changed her look to compete against Batgirl to win The Caped Crusader's affections in *Batman* #197.

SOMEWHERE IN GOTHAM CITY, IN A SECRET HIDEAWAY KNOWN ONLY TO THE OVERLORDS OF THE UNDERWORLD -- SITS A LIVING, ROGUES' GALLERY OF CRIMEDOM'S CLEVEREST CROOKS...
ALL RIGHT, PENGUIN-- THIS MEETING YOU SUMMONED US TO BETTER BE NO GAG!
YOU INTERRUPTED MY CATNAP--
I WAS TRYING ON A NEW HAT WHEN YOUR BIRDY VOICE ASSURED ME IT WAS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!
CLUE US IN! WHOSE LIFE? WHOSE DEATH?
BATMAN'S DEATH!
AND OURS AS WELL!
PENGUIN
MAD HATTER
CLUE MASTER
CAT WOMAN
GETAWAY GENIUS
JOKER
JOHNNY WITTS

The newly green-suited Catwoman sat down with other rogues from the gallery to aid The Caped Crusader in *Batman* #201.

his obvious love for Selina (she thought), which frustrated her. Actually, The World's Greatest Detective didn't realize she had a crush on him, the big dope. He finally expressed his suspicions to The Boy Wonder, to which Robin replied, "Duh."

At her wit's end, Catwoman captured our Terrific Trio and gave Batman an ultimatum: Marry her or she'd return to crime. Bats declined, so she robbed some people and offered again to return the loot if Batman would marry her. He again declined, and Batgirl decided enough was enough and saved the day. As Catwoman was led off to jail, she scoffed at Batgirl's denials of wanting Batman to herself.

Catwoman returned in the very next issue, #198 (Feb 67), but it was another 80-Page Giant "All-Villain Issue," which she surely wasn't going to miss at this point. Throughout the Silver Age, she made a habit of ensuring she was included in just about any Batman-reprint package into which she could worm her way.

The Felonious Feline was back a mere three issues later, in "Batman's Gangland Guardians!" in *Batman* #201 (May 68). I'm not sure how she'd missed out on the "anniversary" celebration in *Batman* #200, since The Scarecrow, Joker, Penguin, and Killer Moth (?) had helped The Dynamic Duo celebrate. Maybe she hadn't been paroled yet. As it was, Gotham City seemed to have a very liberal parole policy.

Several rogues joined Catwoman and other villains in #201 to discuss what to do about Batman. But killing him wasn't on the table this time. The group comprised Joker, Catwoman, Mad Hatter, Penguin, Clue Master, Getaway Genius, and Johnny Witts, the latter three having appeared in recent bat-adventures.

Pengy had been tipped that a West Coast crime syndicate was moving into Gotham, with its first

AH-H-H PURR-FECT! NOW WE FORM AN UNBEATABLE TEAM!
BUT WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?
BESIDES THE LOOT WE SPLIT, YOU HELP ME OUTWIT BATMAN -- I HELP YOU REVENGE YOURSELVES ON THE MEN WHO SENT YOU TO PRISON!
A BATTLE OF THE SEXES, EH? WHAT'S OUR FIRST OBJECTIVE?

Catwoman changed her look again in *Batman* #210 and she outfitted nine recent felons in the same duds to be her "Feline Furies."

order of business to kill Batman. He pointed out that, with Batman gone, there would be no one to keep the syndicate from killing all of them, too — which it surely would do. So they agreed that they had to protect Batman from the syndicate's assassination attempts. What irony!

Mayhem ensued, as The Caped Crusader narrowly missed death time after time without knowing how he'd done it. Ultimately, he learned what (other) villain was behind the death traps, but he never did learn who his guardian angels had been.

Catwoman steered clear of Bats for eight entire issues this time, returning in "The Case of the Purr-loined Pearl!" in *Batman* #210 (Mar 69). She'd apparently used her time off to create yet another costume, this time a slinky blue number with light blue leggings; navy bodice, gloves, and boots; and red mask and boot cuffs. Double yikes. The mask gave her a certain demonic appearance that none of her other costumes had had, but it wasn't her best look.

She apparently had gone legit once again, opening a "slenderizing" salon and selling her beloved Kitty Car. Try as he might, Batman couldn't pin anything on her until she put her big plan into action. She contacted eight women inmates about to be released — including Light Laura, Florid Flo, Big Barbara, Sultry Sarah, and Timid Trixie. (Kids, don't try giving yourself alliterative nicknames like this at home. Leave it to the pros.)

Catwoman's plan was to shape up these former cons and turn them into doubles for her, all dressed in her new sultry costume, which would confound Batman as they pulled off the purr-fect crime. Sorry, but you have to give me credit for restraint until now. Sadly for Selina, things didn't go according to plan, and she wound up being ensnared by a kitten and a ball of yarn. How appropriate.

Catwoman made her final Silver Age appearance in *Wonder Woman* #202, where she teamed with Diana and Fafhrd and The Gray Mouser.

Ms. Kyle apparently wore out her welcome in the Bat-books, taking three years before she popped up again. Unfortunately, she did not spend the time creating a new costume. Instead, she returned in yet another heroine's series well away from her usual haunts, ending her Silver Age career just as she had begun it.

It started when The Amazonian Princess (now in her Emma Peel phase) and her buddy I Ching flew to Tibet in *Wonder Woman* #201 (Aug 72). They were there to learn more about The Fist of Flame, a gem worshipped by a small cult. Some of the cult's members had kidnapped her new buddy Johnny Double and attacked her, so she flew to their home to see what the heck was up with that.

After trekking through a blinding snowstorm along a perilous mountainous trail, they arrived to find The Fist, which, in fact, was an enormous ruby embedded in a gigantic idol's forehead. Diana retrieved the stone after battling the cult, only to be knocked to the ground when Catwoman showed up.

Why was Catwoman seeking a giant Tibetan ruby just as Diana Prince braved life and limb to find it herself? As noted about Catwoman's first Silver Age adventure, just because this column is called "Ask Mr. Silver Age" doesn't mean I can answer every question. Let's just go with it.

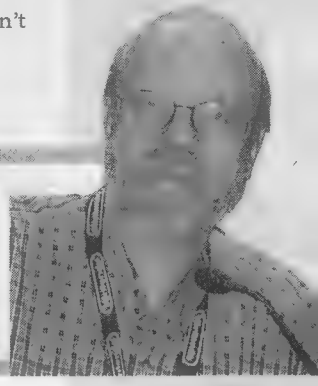
Wouldn't you know it, Catwoman, too, was kayoed by the cult. The two costumed women then had to face off with samurai swords (don't ask) while suspended over an inferno. The winner would be enslaved; the loser would be sushi.

Needless to say, they freed themselves and were escaping when The Fist somehow transported them all to another dimension/world — aka Nehwon. (Read it backward.) That place turned out to be the home to Fafhrd and The Gray Mouser, who were about to star in their own soon-to-be-gone DC comic book, *Swords of Sorcery*. Once the mayhem of meeting each other died down in *Wonder Woman* #202 (Oct 72), the two duos discovered they had mutual interests, as the barbarians were seeking a related gem.

Fafhrd and The Amazon (and I Ching) teamed up, as did (wait for it) The Mouser and The Cat. They battled an evil sorcerer and his army of minions in their own ways and set things right. That involved bringing the barbarian heroes with them to the 20th century. But one look around at the traffic and modern conveniences, and the two of them hopped the next interdimensional portal outta there.

That elaborate marketing misadventure apparently tuckered out Selina, since she went into hiding until "The Curious Case of the Catwoman's Coincidences!" in *Batman* #266 (Aug 75). She's managed to hang in there on and off since, making a dramatic return in recent years with her goggled look, complete with low-zippered catsuit and less subtle approaches to flirting.

Cats may not change their spots, but I wouldn't be surprised to see Catwoman pop up in yet another costume any day.



Known to fans worldwide as "Mr. Silver Age," **CRAIG SHUTT** has waxed nostalgic about comics of old in **CBG** since 1992. Send comments and suggestions to ***craigshutt@ameritech.net***.

"Ask Mr. Silver Age" is © 2012 Craig Shutt

Remembering Ray Bradbury

Experience a Christmas in summer

by **TONY ISABELLA**

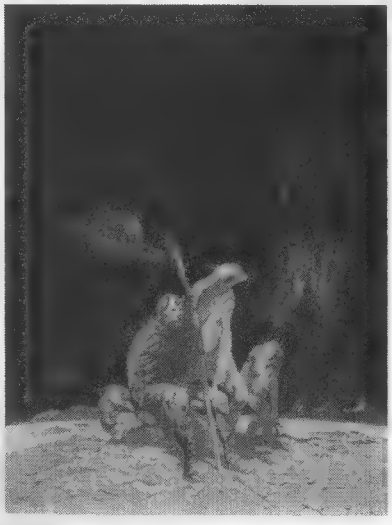
Mars is unbearably far away today.
— on hearing of Ray Bradbury's death

Ray Bradbury passed into eternity June 5. He was 91 years old, one of the most accomplished writers of all time, and continued to write every day of his life, finding a constant joy in putting his imagination into words for others to enjoy. If envy were one of my otherwise numerous character flaws, I would envy his writing every day into his 90s far more than his well-deserved success.

I have no "close encounter" stories to share about Bradbury. I met and spoke to him once at a convention. It wasn't a long chat. I told him how much I loved his work, probably mentioned a few of my favorite Bradbury stories, and he graciously thanked me as if he'd not heard the same from hundreds of thousands of readers who loved him and his words.

I discovered Bradbury in the small library of Sts. Philip and James Elementary School, which I attended from grades 1 through 8. I had already read all the Isaac Asimov books, fiction and non-fiction, and *The Martian Chronicles* called to me. I read other science fiction, as well, but no other authors ever excited me as Asimov and Bradbury did. I soon learned Bradbury didn't always write science fiction. Whatever he wrote that I could get my hands on, I read.

Some years later, on one of my countless visits to Kay's Books in downtown Cleveland, I scored used copies of *The Autumn People* and *Tomorrow Midnight*. These were paperback reprints of the Bradbury stories adapted by E.C. Comics in the 1950s. Seeing stories by one of my favorite authors in my favorite storytelling medium was like Christmas in summer.



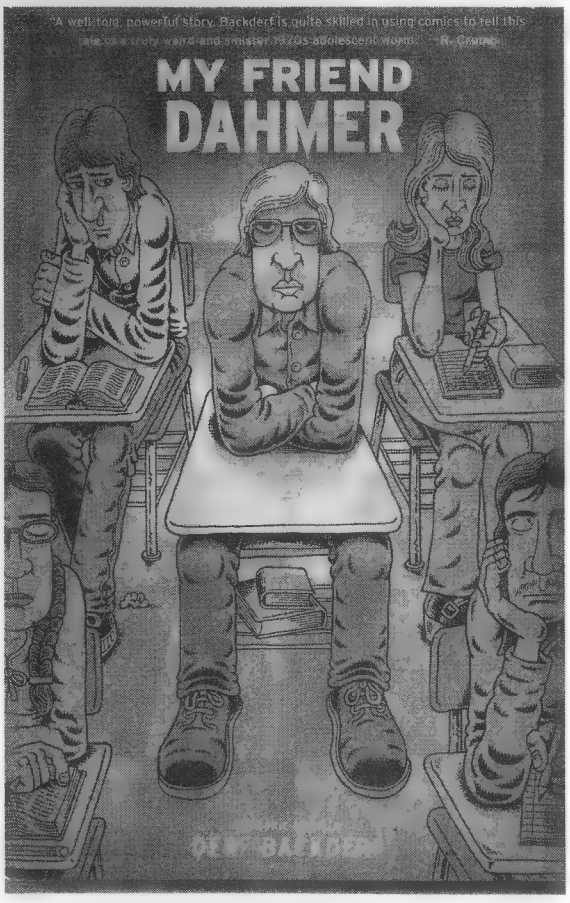
Frank Frazetta's original oil painting that was used as the cover for 1966's *Tomorrow Midnight* sold for more than $83,000 in a Heritage Signature Sale.

Sometimes we make connections in our brains without realizing that we've done so until they explode into our conscious thought with a sound of thunder. I love the work of many writers, but only two of them taught me the nobility of being a writer. One of those is my longtime friend Harlan Ellison, whose *Dangerous Visions* anthologies got me through my first winter in New York City. The other is Ray Bradbury. When times get tough, as they do for a writer of my age in the comics field, I think of Harlan and Ray and the honor they have brought to being a writer. I always think of them as the patron saints of writers.

It's been too long since I've read my Bradbury on a steady basis. Like much of my personal library, those books are in deep storage. But I'll find them soon ... and read them with joy ... and once again experience a Christmas in summer.

Thank you, Mr. Bradbury. Thank you.

My Friend Dahmer (Abrams ComicArts, $17.95) is a punch-to-the gut graphic novel by Derf Backderf, who went to middle and high school with serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer. Derf's much shorter comic-book version of this story landed a spot in my *1,000 Comic Books You Must Read*. If I ever write a sequel, this longer and even more intense version will be one of


"A well-told, powerful story. Backderf is quite skilled in using comics to tell this tale of a truly weird and sinister 1970s adolescent world." —R. Crumb
MY FRIEND DAHMER

the first comics included.

Dahmer went to school not far from my own Medina County. In fact, another of his classmates was one of my son's baseball coaches in Medina's summer league. So the area where Dahmer lived and where his terrible urges led to his first murder is very familiar to me, making his story all the more chilling.

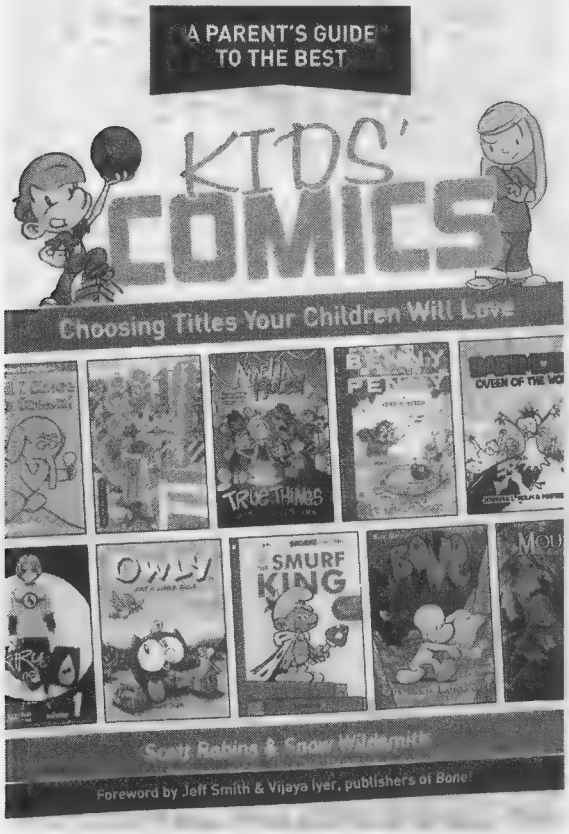
Derf brings incredible storytelling skill and impeccable research to this story. Told from the distance of time, Dahmer's fate seems almost predetermined, and the reader has to wonder how it could have been possible that no one saw it then. Hindsight is always clear, of course, but Derf asks tough questions about the adults in Jeff Dahmer's life and of himself. I fear these are questions we will all be asking ourselves for many years to come. We'd be naive to think there are no more Jeffrey Dahmers out there or that parents and teachers have gotten that much better at spotting the signs of a murderously disturbed youth.

My Friend Dahmer is a superb work, worthy of the comics industry's highest awards. With each new effort topping the previous work, I think Derf Backderf is a creator well worth watching. Whatever he does next, I'm there.

www.abramsbooks.com
ISBN 978-1-4197-0217-4

From the publishers of my *1000 Comic Books You Must Read* — consider this my full disclosure — comes ***A Parent's Guide to the Best Kids' Comics*** by Scott Robins and Snow Wildsmith (Krause, $16.99) with a hundred reviews of age-appropriate books and several hundred more recommendations. Hah, I still beat them by 50!

The authors are library professionals and experts in the field of children's literature. Dividing their reviews into grade levels — pre-K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8 — Robins and Wildsmith present a wide range of excellent choices with attention given to the books' educational value, heads up for the possible problems some parents might have with content, and pointers to other books a child who enjoys these books might enjoy, as well.


A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE BEST
KIDS' COMICS
Choosing Titles Your Children Will Love
Foreword by Jeff Smith & Vijaya Iyer, publishers of Bone!

Besides parents, comics professionals and readers can also benefit from this book. Plus a whole lot more I want to read.

A Parent's Guide to the Best Kids' Comics is one of those books you can read over an extended period of time, reading a few entries as you have the time and inclination. It's a book that should be part of your personal comics library.

www.krausebooks.com
ISBN 978-1-4402-2994-7

When Barbara Slate, that most exceptional cartoonist, told me about her new book, I opined that, as a happily married man for the past 28 years, I might not be precisely the target audience for ***Getting Married and Other Mistakes*** (Other Press, $14.95). You would think after 28 years of wedded bliss with my Sainted Wife Barb, that I'd have learned to realize women named Barbara are smarter than I am.

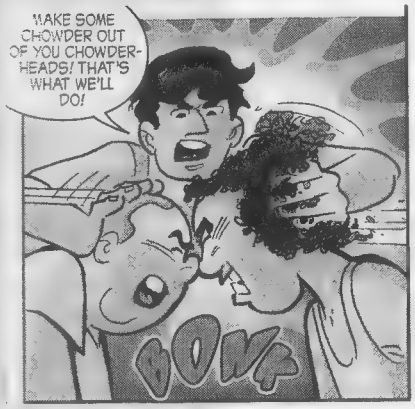
Work in progress, I am.

Getting Married is a sometimes heartbreaking but uplifting tale of a woman not unlike the talented Slate whose Mr. Right is really Mr. Wrong. That "Jo" is a wedding photographer makes her "plight" and self-reflection all the more intense. She is as fully realized a character as I've seen in recent comics and graphic novels. You can't help but root for her.

Getting Married doesn't shy away from either the heartbreak or the humor of Jo's life. It's a wonderfully told tale with one of those just-right endings that elude many comics works. I recommend it to my readers — and now I'm going to ever so slyly put my copy of the book on my wife's bedstand. I think she'll enjoy it.

www.otherpress.com
ISBN 978-15905-1535-8

Getting Married is a sometimes heartbreaking but uplifting tale of a woman not unlike the talented Slate whose Mr. Right is really Mr. Wrong.



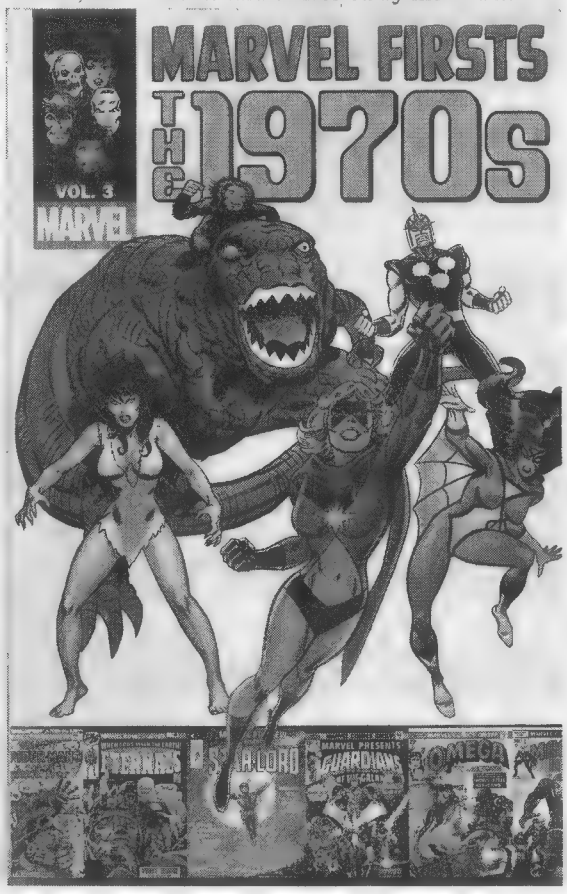
Inspired by the new movie and, of course, by hundreds of previous appearances of Curly, Larry, and Moe, Papercutz's ***The Three Stooges #1: Bed-Bugged and Other Stories*** ($6.99) will delight new and old fans of the comedy trio. Written by George Gladir and Jim Salicrup with art by the superlative Stan Goldberg, these adventures combine the classic riffs of the Stooges' comics, movies, and shorts with a modern sensibility. The boys train as sumo wrestlers, star in a science-fiction Western, buy a haunted house, and do battle with bedbugs.

It's a fun book and definitely worthy of the Three Stooges legacy. The next book in the series can't come soon enough for me.

www.papercutz.com
ISBN 978-1-59707-315-8

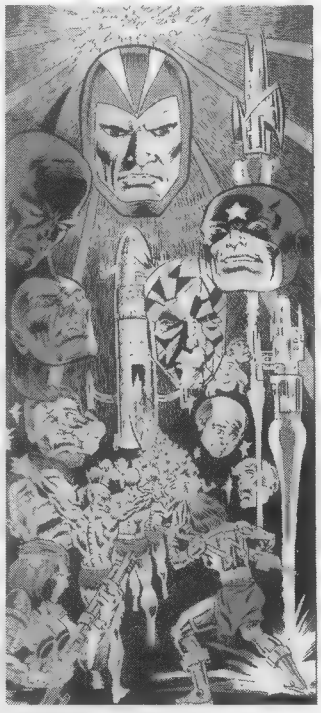
If it seems as if I've reviewed nearly every volume of *Marvel Firsts*, it's because I have. In my defense, if defense be needed, I just love the heck out of these books. The 1960s volume and the first of the 1970s volumes reminded me why the Marvel comics of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, and others were such a game-changer for the comics industry and for me personally. With the second 1970s book, I was right in the thick of things, so I relived the excitement of my time in the Marvel offices.

With ***Marvel Firsts: The 1970s* Vol. 3** ($29.99), I was around for the earliest debuts — the book reprints the first issues of *Champions* and *Black Goliath*, both written and conceived by me — but



If it seems as if I've reviewed nearly every volume of *Marvel Firsts*, it's because I have.

I wasn't on staff by that time. Still, I was connected enough to be well aware of the throw-everything-against-the-wall-and-see-what-sticks state of mind of the post-Roy Thomas editorial department. I recall with amusement how I got the green light to start work on *The Champions*, *Black Goliath*, and Tigra (in *Giant-Size Creatures*) within days of one another, and then told a day or so later that I was already three weeks behind on the new assignments. Suffering spider-webs!



My life was as chaotic as any Marvel madman's back then, so it was nice to sit back and enjoy these new characters and concepts that hit the newsstands while I was trying to remain sane. I never got the point of *Skull the Slayer*, Bloodstone (in *Marvel Presents*), or Starlord (in *Marvel Preview*), but Steve Gerber knocked me out with Guardians of the Galaxy (in *Marvel Presents*) and *Omega the Unknown*, the latter with the added genius of Mary Skrenes.

Jack Kirby's *Eternals*, *Devil Dinosaur*, and *Machine Man* were 100%, unadulterated Kirby. My initial reaction was confusion, but that was typical of that decade for me. On rereading them, I appreciate their fun and imagination.

Then, there were *Nova* and *Ms. Marvel*. I can't think of *Nova* without recalling Marv Wolfman's ire at my calling it *Green Nova*. And *Ms. Marvel* was a mess — an intriguing mess, but a mess, nonetheless. On the other hand, they were entertaining.

Roy Thomas, friend and mentor, delivered *What If?* and The 3-D Man (in *Marvel Premiere*) unto the Marvel Universe. I loved both, but only the former stayed around for long. Also included in this volume: *Spider-Woman*, *Moon Knight*, and *She-Hulk*.

Marvel Firsts: The 1970s Vol. 3 is a thick chunk of Marvel history and another of those must-have books for your home comics library. I hope the series continues into the 1980s, because I don't remember what the heck I was doing in that decade.

www.marvel.com
ISBN 978-0-7851-6382

The magazine-size ***Life with Archie*** (Archie, $3.99 per issue) remains one of my favorites among current comics titles. One of its two ongoing serials follows a world in which Archie married Betty, the other a world in which he married Veronica. Though the stories got a touch too SF for me when the two worlds crossed over briefly, writer Paul Kupperberg has brought them back to their true strength in the most recent issues. These are true-to-life stories of people we've grown up with, living through some of the same stuff we have lived through and building

good lives for themselves. Oh, sure, these characters have a leg up on us because they live in Riverdale — "The Small Town with the Big Heart!" — but I only envy them because I'm not living there.

Life with Archie got some press recently, when Kevin Keller married the love of his life. There was some organized hate-mongering in the real world as a result of this, but, in Riverdale, it was the reflection of the attitudes of most young people in the real world.

Even so, Kupperberg hasn't forgotten that there are people who are still mired in old attitudes. An older woman, for example, doesn't want to be treated by Kevin's doctor husband. More than ever, my hope for the future lies with my children and yours.

Hot-button issues aside, visiting near-future Riverdale isn't that different from visiting with my own friends and neighbors. There are marriages going through rough patches and coming through better than ever. There are dreams and romances that don't work out, and others that do.

Tragic illness isn't absent from *Life With Archie*. It's claimed one beloved character, and another is fighting for her life in the current issue.

Kupperberg gives us great characters, honest emotions, and a dollop of humor. Artists Fernando Ruiz, Bob Smith, Pat and Tim Kennedy, Al Milgrom, and others portray all the above with skill that looks effortless, so you know they're busting their humps to make it look that way. Each new issue is a delight.

Life with Archie is further proof that I'm just never going to run out of great comics to read and write about.

www.archiecomics.com

THIS JOINT HOPS ALMOST AS MUCH AS AN E.R./ WHO KNEW?
I'LL GET OUT OF YOUR WAY. SEE YOU HOME FOR DINNER.
HELLO, MRS. STERN. I'M CLAY WALKER, THE NEW DOCTOR!
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, YOUNG MAN.
BUT IF YOU DON'T MIND... I'D BE MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE WAITING FOR... OH./ DR. BARNES!
ER... SURE, MRS. STERN. WHATEVER MAKES YOU COMFORTABLE...

TONY ISABELLA, comics writer and author, has been appearing in ***CBG*** since #3 in 1971. Comments on this column and review items for future columns can be sent to: Tony's Tips, 840 Damon Drive, Medina, OH 44256.
You can e-mail Tony at ***tonyisa@ohio.net***.

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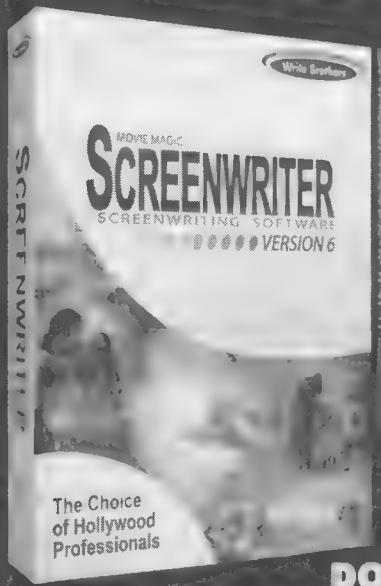
Mark Waid & Movie Magic Screenwriter™



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NAVIGATING THE MAINSTREAM

PICKS AND PANS FROM DARK HORSE, DC, IDW, IMAGE, AND MARVEL

REVIEWS

3 Story: Secret Files of the Giant Man

★★★½

Dark Horse

$3.50, color, 32 pgs.

Writer and artist: Matt Kindt

Craig Pressgang, The Giant Man, is different from Hank Pym, Marvel's Giant-Man. For one thing, like Lady Gaga, he was born that way. For another, he doesn't change size; he's three stories tall and three stories he shall remain. Appropriately enough, this issue contains three stories.

The stories are good — tales of The Giant Man in France, Egypt, and The Philippines — but what really makes the issue is the art of creator Matt Kindt. Watercolors are an unusual medium for comic-book art but the result is a fluid visual. Given that the narrative occurs in the mid-1960s, the art lends itself to a vintage feel. It also casts a somber shadow over the entire issue, no matter the current goings-on. This style might not work for super-beings hitting one another but it's perfect for the bittersweet life of a man who can never know normal human interaction.

The issue includes a six-page sample of Kindt's next project, the equally intriguing *Mind Mgmt*. If *Previews* failed to lure a reader in, seeing this excerpt may well do the trick.

— Jack Abramowitz

www.darkhorse.com

Frankenstein Alive, Alive! #1

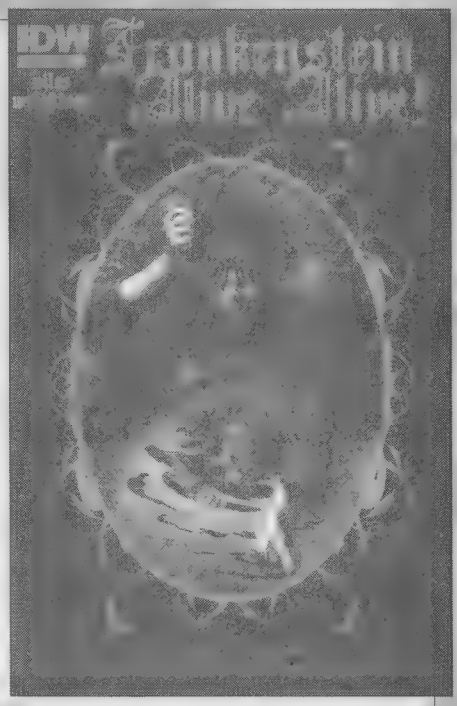
★★★★

IDW

$3.99, b/w, 32 pgs.

Writer: Steve Niles

Artist: Bernie Wrightson



Bernie Wrightson, the legendary horror artist who made his mark illustrating Mary W. Shelley's *Frankenstein* in 1983, returns to the character he loves so much. Frankenstein is as linked with artist Wrightson as it is with actor Boris Karloff.

If your familiarity with *Frankenstein* is the 1931 Karloff film of the same name, then you need to read Shelley's 1818 novel — because that's the basis of Wrightson's version. This series serves as a sequel to Shelley's work, opening with the monster working in a traveling sideshow alongside freaks who accept him as one of them.

To say Wrightson's art is stunning and phenomenal is understating it. Per IDW, each page was scanned to mimic the original art as closely as possible to show off Wrightson's detailed brushwork, and making the project black and white serves to establish the mood even more appropriately.

Extras include an interview with Wrightson, tracing his love of all things Frankenstein, as well as a serialization of Shelley's original prose story. It's been 30 years since Wrightson illustrated a *Frankenstein* story. This is worth the wait!

— Kurt Anthony Krug

www.idwpublishing.com

Penguin: Pain & Prejudice #1-4

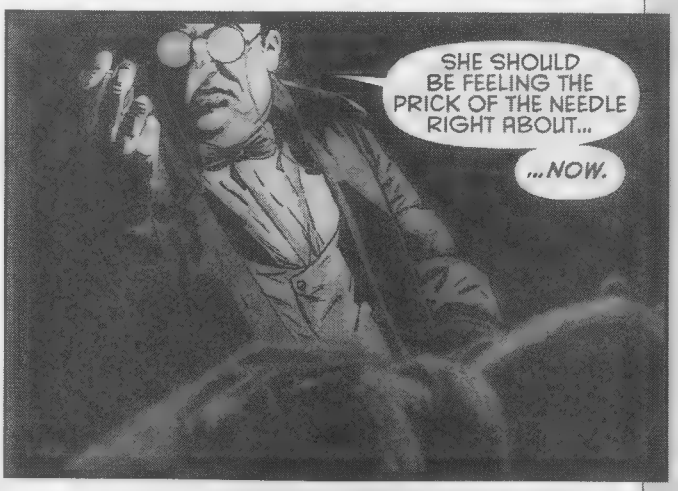
★★★

DC

$2.99 @, color, 32 pgs. @

Writer: Gregg Hurwitz

Artist: Szymon Kudranski



Writer Gregg Hurwitz beefs up long-time Bat-foe The Penguin in what is scheduled to be a five-issue mini-series. Oswald Cobblepot is a deformed child shunned by society and his family, save his mother, for whom he develops an Oedipal complex. Eventually, he gets revenge on his cruel brothers and father, paving the way to becoming the ruthless, cruel mob boss he is today. He won't kill a person who crosses him — just that person's loved ones.

The story is told from The Penguin's point of view. It occurs in the present and has *Lost*-style flashbacks that depict a scene from The Penguin's childhood that is relevant to a present event. Hurwitz even gives a biology lesson on penguins and explains li'l Oswald's obsession with the bird for which he's named. Batman is in the story, but it's a cameo.

Szymon Kudranski's art is moody and fits the script. This story does for The Penguin what *The Killing Joke* did for The Joker: dynamiting Burgess Meredith's portrayal of the character from the campy 1960s TV series.

— Kurt Anthony Krug

www.dccomics.com

Avengers #24.1

★★★

Marvel

$3.99, color, 32 pgs.

Writer: Brian Michael Bendis

Artists: Brandon Peterson, David Finch

The Vision — who has been "dead" since getting "killed" by She-Hulk in "Avengers: Disassembled" — is spotlighted in this "Point 1" issue. It's unclear whether this issue occurs before or after *Avengers: The Children's Crusade*.

After being rebuilt by Tony Stark, The Vision learns that She-Hulk was being manipulated by The Scarlet Witch (his estranged wife who went insane). So he confronts She-Hulk and Magneto, his father-in-law. There's a touching scene with Captain America, who tells The Vision that he knows what it's like to wake up in a brave, new world.

Through She-Hulk, it seems as if Brian Michael Bendis is apologizing about the controversy he created with "Avengers: Disassembled." The Vision is acting in character: This is classic Vision. Kudos to Bendis for getting him right — something he does again in *Avengers vs. X-Men* #0, when he encounters The Scarlet Witch again.

Brandon Peterson's art is serviceable. It's rough in parts, not as detailed as his *Uncanny X-Men* work, but readers can forgive that as he demonstrates his skill in laying out Bendis' script quite well and participates in a story that brings back the definitive Vision.

— Kurt Anthony Krug

www.marvel.com

The Manhattan Projects #1

★★★

Image

$3.50, color, 28 pgs.

Writer: Jonathan Hickman

Artist: Nick Pitarra

Most people know that The Manhattan Project was the code name for the development of the atomic bomb. But imagine if that information had been allowed to leak to the public to quell curiosity and cover up an array of even *grander* projects, such as teleportation and artificial intelligence.

That's the idea behind Jonathan Hickman's captivating new series, which brings to the title the same kind of intelligence and fascination that has entertained readers of Marvel's *Fantastic Four* for the past few years. Hickman's world is one in which many of the above-mentioned technological wonders have come to pass, and oddly complementing it is the backstory of the series' main protagonist, which has plenty of psychological elements (not to mention violence — to placate those who might think that this series is a little too highbrow).

Nick Pitarra delivers a kind of Geof Darrow/Frank Quitely look with a precision that provides plenty of detail for these high-tech contraptions and the destruction that they leave in their wake. The art enhances the story and vice versa, illustrating the great chemistry between Hickman and Pitarra. This might be hard to find, but it's worth the search.

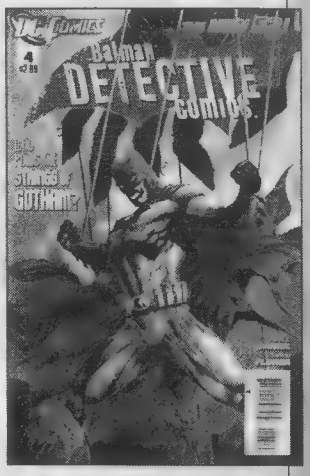
— Jim Johnson

www.imagecomics.com

Detective Comics #1-6 ★★★

DC

$2.99 @, color, 32 pgs. @
Writer: Tony S. Daniel
Artists: Daniel, Ryan Winn



Detective Comics may well be the darkest of DC's "New 52" flagship titles. Considering the number of Batman-related titles, that in itself is saying something. Nonetheless, Tony S. Daniel and Ryan Winn have concocted a solid, intriguing tale about The Joker, The Dollmaker, and, of course, Bruce Wayne: a tale that's not for the squeamish. As such, it isn't for everyone.

Daniel's writing provides for future stories to emerge from this opening arc, while paying heed to the long, rich history of one of comics' greatest rivalries. Fortunately, this isn't a retelling of the origin, but, rather, a continuation (or perhaps an understanding) of the history these characters share. Either way, it's a story told with enthusiasm and entertainment value aplenty.

The art, too, is incredible. Whether it's a long panel shot of Batman flying from building to building in his Gotham-monitoring glory, or a gruesome bit of pugilism and savagery, Winn and Daniel offer memorable images that will make the audience want to revisit the issue, regardless of plot or dialogue.

So what's the best of the new Batman titles? Who knows — and does it matter? *Detective Comics* is already excellent and may become even better, so check it out.

— Ray Sidman

www.dccomics.com

The Strain #1-4 ★

Dark Horse

#1: $1, #2-4: $3.50 @, color, 28 pgs. @
Writers: Guillermo del Toro, Chuck Hogan, David Lapham
Artist: Mike Huddleston

Let's see what's in this adaptation of filmmaker Guillermo del Toro and novelist Chuck Hogan's vampire-horror novel *The Strain*. There's the mysterious airplane full of seemingly dead passengers, which was pretty chilling when we saw it on Fox's *Fringe* in 2008. There's the not-so-dead pilot who scares the bejeezus out of everyone when he unexpectedly wakes up, just as it happened on ABC's *Lost* back in '04. And don't forget the crazed-looking old man who knows the truth and spews cryptic warnings; he looks as if he came straight out of the first *Omen* film.

Then, there's the high-strung husband-father. The skinny, pale Goth rocker. The hot-tempered, Hispanic drug dealer. And who knows how many more clichéd characters del Toro came up with? And all of those undead passengers? Turns out there's a solar eclipse coming. Hmmm ... wonder when they'll all rise?

The story is *so* full of stereotypes and predictable situations that it's impossible for David Lapham to make something suspenseful out of it. Mike Huddleston largely sticks with a shadowy, minimalist look but revs it way too high when things get gory. This comic is a strain, all right. Treat it like a solar eclipse: Don't look at it.

— Jim Johnson

www.darkhorse.com

Hulk Smash The Avengers #1 ★★★

Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs.
Writer: Tom DeFalco
Artists: Ron Frenz, Sal Buscema

Hulk Smash The Avengers is a weekly, five-issue mini-series featuring untold tales of The Hulk battling Earth's Mightiest Heroes set in various eras in Marvel continuity.

This first issue takes place between *Avengers* Vol. 1 #7 and #14, which were originally published in the 1960s.

No creative team captures the flavor of that era of Marvel Comics better than Tom DeFalco, Ron Frenz, and Sal Buscema. (Sal was part of that era, along with his brother John.)

The plot irons out continuity kinks and even adds to canon, as The Avengers — Captain America, Wasp, Giant-Man, Iron Man, Thor, and Rick Jones — seek out The Hulk in order to get him to rejoin.

The Hulk aligns himself with the original Masters of Evil and fights The Avengers.

Frenz channels Jack Kirby, John Romita, and the

Buscemas — key architects of early Marvel — into each panel, packing them with plenty of power, especially the scenes with Iron Man and The Hulk fighting.

This project has the soul of a Marvel comic book from a bygone age.

— Kurt Anthony Krug

www.marvel.com

Sometimes our reviewers just don't agree!

Saucer Country #1-3

DC/Vertigo

$2.99 @, color, 32 pgs. @

Writer: Paul Cornell; Artist: Ryan Kelly

Reviewed by Jim Johnson and John Petty

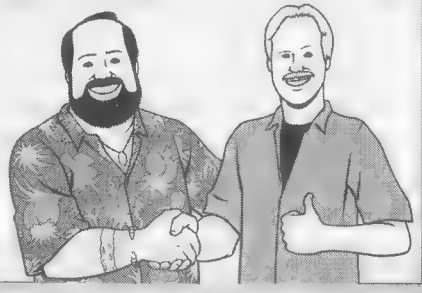
Jim Johnson: I really thought I was through with stories about alien abductions in the Southwest, but, when I saw that this one was adding modern political intrigue to a classic, if overused, premise, I thought it was worth a shot. And it's paying off, because this time one of the individuals apparently abducted is none other than a Democratic presidential candidate, a Hispanic woman with personal baggage whose character is based on a number of amalgamated elements from political personalities over the past few years. Writer Paul Cornell's unusual story is full of both political and science-fiction intrigue and it's a lot more exciting than watching Barack Obama and Mitt Romney trade quips. But I've got a hunch we're going to be trading a few quips of our own ...

John Petty: Only if you're deranged enough to actually like this muddling mass of mediocrity. Remember when they added human blood to the red ink used to print a comic book? I think this time they used Ambien, since this is the most soporific, sleep-inducing snooze-fest I've ever had to staple my eyes open to read. Here's my summary of the first three issues: A hot Hispanic presidential candidate realizes aliens may have abducted her. Nine dollars later, that's all I know. There's no "intrigue" here, just the tease that there *might* be intrigue *somewhere*, at some point. Making things worse are Cornell's characters: bland, undefined cardboard cutouts whom we're given no reason to care about or even be interested in. This would be better as an urban legend: talked about but never seen.

Johnson: And in condemning this series, you've hit on its central premise: exploring the mythology or urban legends that bridge the gap between the truth and lies regarding the presence of aliens on Earth. And that's what Cornell is doing: exploring why people keep seeing stereotypical flying saucers and little green men while so little evidence exists to back them up. And is Cornell's Harvard professor character a crackpot, as Cornell seems to be going out of his way to have us believe, or is he onto something? This series works, because it provides something different while wrapped in elements that are only seemingly familiar.

Petty: You're reading way too much into this, making the title what you want it to be, not what it is. We've all seen this story so many times before — like on every episode of *X-Files* — that we can fill in the blanks on our own, which is what you've done. This book is so unoriginal and so ill-conceived that it makes you believe it's more than it is through its sheer familiarity. The fact is: Nothing of consequence has happened in three issues, and none of the characters has risen above dull stereotype (the egghead professor who everyone thinks is nuts, but who's really the only one who knows what's going on, the no-nonsense politician sucked into a situation she can't believe, *etc.*). Sorry, but I'll save my three bucks and watch *X-Files* again.

www.dccomics.com



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REVIEWS

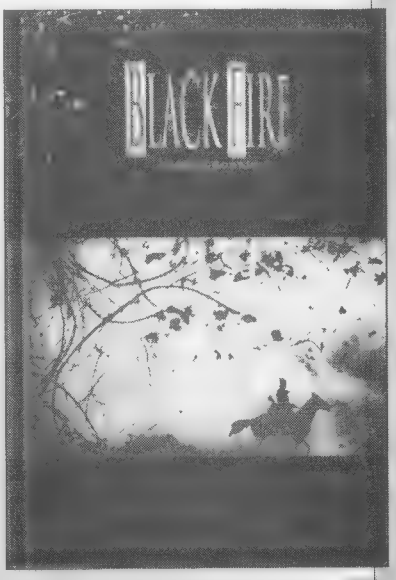
Black Fire

★★★

Archaia

$24.95, color, 178 pgs.

Writer and artist: Hernan Rodriguez



This ambitious work from writer-artist Hernan Rodriguez utilizes Slavic lore in telling a fictional tale of the Napoleonic campaigns in Russia in the early 19th century. It's a horror story with Lovecraftian atmosphere — which is appropriate, given the author's prior work adapting Lovecraft's writings.

The pages turn quickly and the images are unrelentingly spooky. It's easy to become sucked in and feel goosebumps as you read. The source material and the writing certainly contribute to that, though the art plays no small role. On the downside, the writing is often choppy, and the nature of the storytelling and the style of art occasionally create confusion regarding exactly what's transpiring from scene to scene.

Nevertheless, this story of isolationism, abandonment, and man vs. supernatural evil is definitely worth checking out.

— Ray Sidman

www.archaia.com

ISBN: 978-1936393381

Planet of the Apes #12

★★★★

Boom! Studios

$3.99, color, 24 pgs.

Writer: Daryl Gregory

Artist: Carlos Magno

The first year of Boom! Studios' excellent *Planet of the Apes* relaunch comes to a close, capping off what is arguably the best treatment the franchise has ever seen, in any medium.

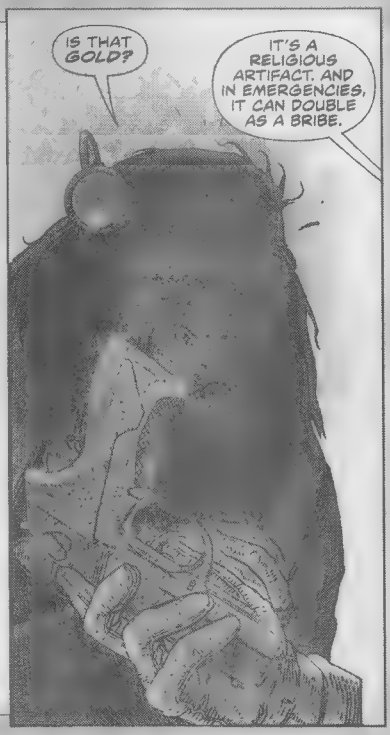
Writer Daryl Gregory's focus on racism and class society throughout this series' run has been perfectly aligned with the message originally put forth in the first movie. And he's told an engaging story along with it: nicely characterized and paced, with nods to the films' continuity throughout. The tensions that have been building between apes and humans come to a climax here, with a surprising end to one of the series' main characters and an equally surprising epilogue that sets the stage for the next arc.

And artist Carlos Magno has given Gregory's story a style and flair that's unequalled; the apes' city and culture is given an unusual look beyond that seen in any of the movies. Of course, a good part of this city is laid to ruin in this issue, but he also demonstrates his skill at drawing fiery battle sequences.

Not all franchises travel well to another medium, and fewer still actually come out stronger, but *Planet of the Apes* is one that has.

— Jim Johnson

www.boom-studios.com



Zombies vs. Cheerleaders #7 ★★

Moonstone
$3.99, color, 28 pgs.
Writers and artists: Various

Zombies are wildly popular and cheerleaders are a perennial favorite, so what could be better than a series featuring nothing but zombies going head-to-head with cheerleaders? In a word, plenty.

There's not one continuous storyline featuring a zombie-infested reality in which a cadre of intrepid cheerleaders must fight to save humanity. Instead, there's a series of disconnected vignettes in which zombies and cheerleaders must hammer out their differences, often literally. It defies logic how many cities or alternate realities have zombie-vs.-cheerleader dynamics going on!

A redeeming value, however, comes in the form of occasional guest stars. The 3 Geeks and Hack/Slash, for example, have each headlined a special in the *Zombies vs. Cheerleaders* vein. This issue is saved, at least in part, by a *Supernatural Law* installment by Batton Lash entitled "Cheerleader v. Zombie!"

As much as I love Wolff and Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre, the issue's other three stories are standard *ZvC* fare. "The Inarticulate Dead" by Eric M. Esquivel is clever, though uncomfortably similar to the conclusion of *Marvel Zombies 5*.

— Jack Abramowitz

www.moonstonebooks.com

Vampirella: The Red Room #1 ★★★

Dynamite
$3.99, color, 32 pgs.
Writer: Dan Brereton
Artist: Jean Diaz

Dan Brereton is no stranger to horror (see his creator-owned *Nocturnals*), much less vampires (he's scripted a few *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* stories), and he's the right fit for Vampirella. He even provides the art for one of the three covers for this issue. (The other two are drawn by Ale Garza and Fabiano Neves.)

Vampirella is on the trail of a vampire who's left behind an impressive body count. Along the way, she allies herself with a retired cop named Shooter. Her investigation leads her to the Red Room: an off-the-grid location of no-holds-barred cage matches between man and monster. Naturally, she becomes one of the contestants and faces off with some big, bad monsters.

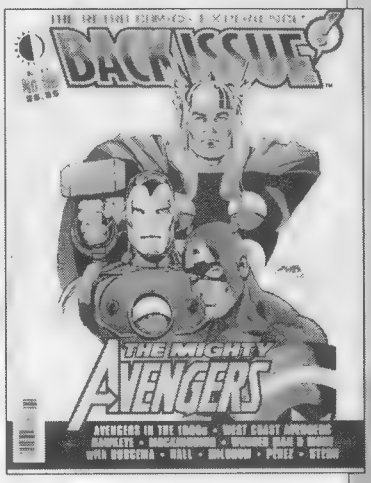
Brereton writes a moody narrative, and his dialogue crackles. Jean Diaz's art is good stuff, displaying a good sense of pacing. This mini-series is worth checking out.

— Kurt Anthony Krug

www.dynamite.net

Back Issue #56 ★★★

Twomorrows
$8.95, color, 80 pgs.
Writers and artists: Various



Marvel's Avengers are showcased this issue with in-depth articles about the creators behind the adventures of Earth's Mightiest Heroes in the 1970s and 1980s. Steve Englehart, Roger Stern, Al Milgrom, Bob Hall, Brett Breeding, Tom DeFalco, George Pérez, Jim McCann, Nel Yomtov, and Roy Thomas are interviewed.

These articles explain why Stern and Englehart left *Avengers* and *West Coast Avengers*, respectively. According to the interviews, Stern was told that he had to replace Captain Marvel II with Captain America as team leader, a move that he found sexist and racist. When he suggested they revisit this issue, he was fired. Englehart said his supervisor didn't like his using Mantis — his creation — in *WCA*. When he kept her, his work was redone without his knowledge. In the interview, he said that leaving *WCA* was a painful time in his career.

Other articles include the reasons behind major events in Mockingbird's career in 1993. The plans were for Hawkeye to go "grim 'n' gritty" — the trend of the industry at that time. The Mockingbird events would be the impetus. These are insightful articles.

— Kurt Anthony Krug

www.twomorrows.com

Fanboys vs. Zombies #1 ★★½

Boom! Studios

$1, color, 24 pgs.

Writer: Sam Humphries

Artist: Jerry Gaylord

I TOLD YOU YOUR COMIC-CON PRIVILEGES WERE REVOKED, PARASITE!
SO PACK IT UP, AND GO BACK TO THE INBRED YOKEL BACKWOODS YOU CAME FROM.

If a fanboy is going to fight a horde of zombies, what better place than Comic-Con International: San Diego, the gathering place of more than 150,000 pop-culture fans?

Rob Porter and his friends make their annual pilgrimage to San Diego and are ready for just about anything, except perhaps a zombie outbreak caused by a contaminated hot dog. Fortunately, their expertise in all things pop culture gives them the edge in battling the creatures.

It may be a horror comic, but Jerry Gaylord's art emphasizes the humorous aspects of both a zombie apocalypse and Comic-Con itself. Most of all, this series reinforces the most important rule about attending conventions: Avoid con food!

Just to make the series even more fun, there is an ongoing contest in each issue that offers readers the opportunity to show up as a zombie in the story.

— Christopher Galvan

www.boom-studios.com

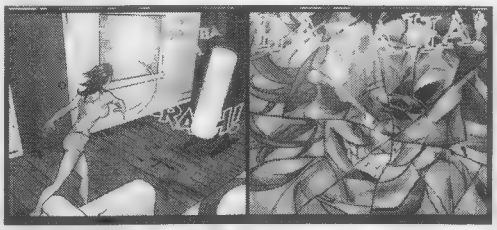
Mirror, Mirror: Forgiveness ★★½

Darkbrain Comics

$19, color, 72 pgs.

Writer: Andrew Zar

Artists: Various



Not to be confused with the '90s horror franchise, the spring-released Julia Roberts children's movie, the classic *Star Trek* episode, or the kajillion other projects with "Mirror, Mirror" in the title (OK, dead horse pummeled), *Forgiveness* tells the story of power-executive Brenna, her coworker and power-exec-wannabe Paul, her mysterious sister Mirriam, and a few others who unwittingly become caught in the supernatural curse that has made Brenna's life a hellish existence since — well, telling would be spoiling.

As this is Darkbrain, the story includes loads of graphic sex to complement the enjoyably spooky imagery and dark atmosphere. The story develops well, and the conclusion is satisfying. The characters are a study in contrasts: Brenna is fascinating and worthy of further exploration, while most of the supporting cast's characters are bland clichés or poorly developed. The artists rotate, and this isn't much of an issue, though some of the work is clearly better than the rest.

Overall, this magazine-sized book warrants a thumb up and is worth reading — though, for $19, you might be better off borrowing a copy from a friend who failed to read this review.

— Ray Sidman

www.darkbrain.com

ISBN: 978-0983431602

Mouse Guard: Black Axe #4 ★★★

Archaia

$3.50, color, 24 pgs.

Writer and artist: David Petersen

Mouse Guard: Black Axe is a prequel to *Mouse Guard: Fall 1152* and *Mouse Guard: Winter 1152.*

In the fourth installment of this six-issue bimonthly limited series, Celanawe is a champion of The Guard known in legends as the "Black Axe," because he wields a coveted weapon of the same name that is as sacred as Excalibur or Mjolnir. In this issue, he battles a fox.

He eventually defeats this predator, but it's more about *how* he outfoxes the fox in a story that is beautifully written and illustrated by David Petersen.

It's a poignant "tail" told in the first person about why The Black Axe must fight this fox and the consequences of the outcome. It's not clear-cut by any means.

Mouse Guard is a kid-friendly book. Yes, there's violence, but it's not gory.

In this issue, a mouse's foot is severed, but there's no geyser of blood. Petersen has another hit, and it's a pleasure to read.

— Kurt Anthony Krug

www.archaia.com

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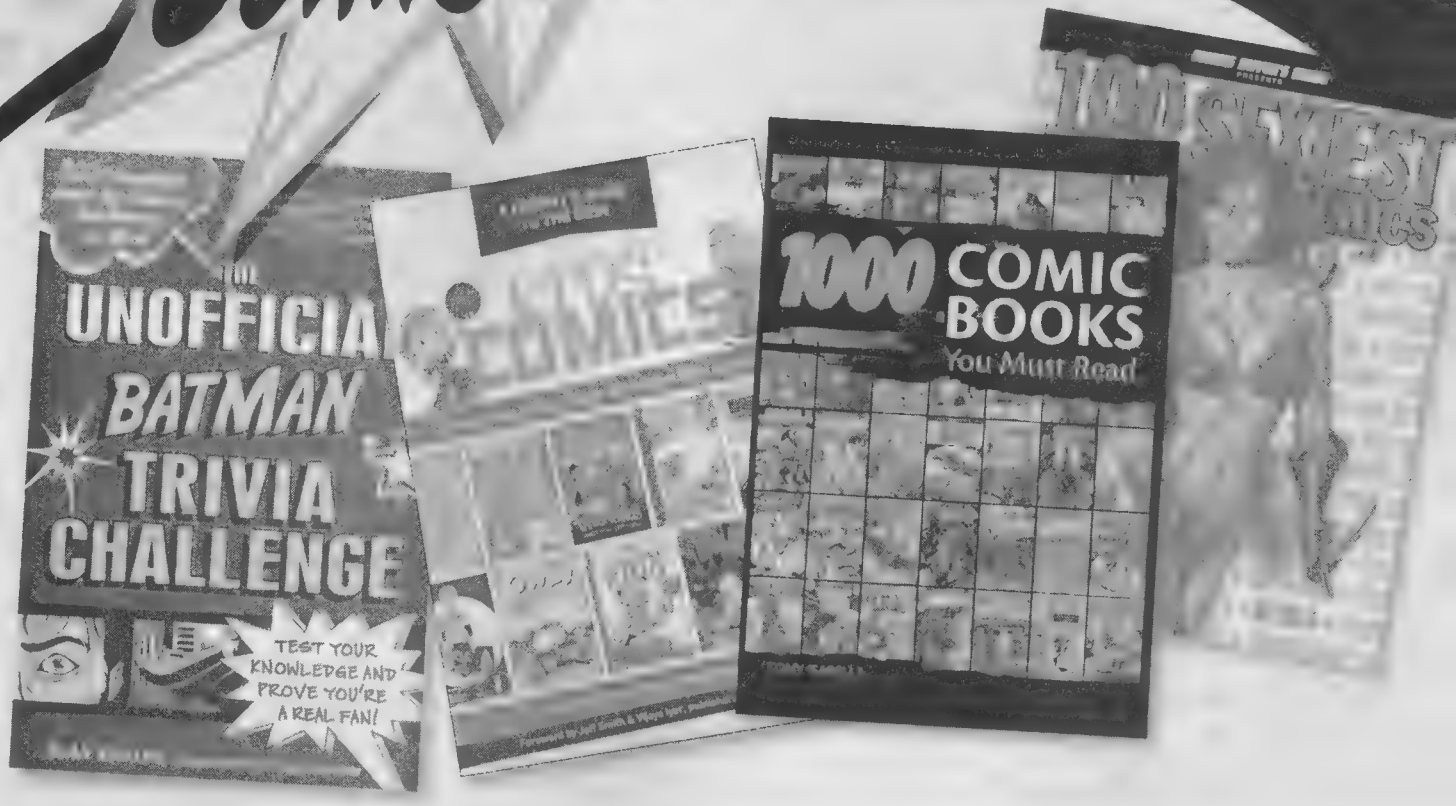

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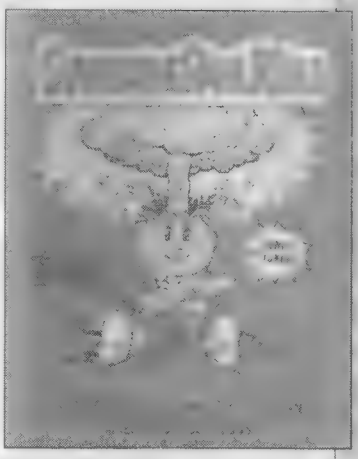
BOUND For Glory

TRADE PAPERBACK AND GRAPHIC NOVEL REVIEWS

Garbage Pail Kids ★★

Abrams Books
$19.99, color, 226 pgs.
Writers: Art Spiegelman, John Pound
Artists: Spiegelman, Pound, *et al.*



Garbage Pail Kids trading cards — gross parodies of *Cabbage Patch Kids* dolls with punny names — were all the rage in the mid-1980s, though they were banned in many schools. Two versions of each card were produced — the art was the same, but the names were changed. For instance, the twin of Adam Bomb (the flagship GPK pushing a detonator that blows up his head, a giant mushroom cloud in its wake) is Blasted Billy. Some were cute; others were pretty vulgar.

This collects the first five series from 1985-86, featuring a total of 206 GPKs. Its dust jacket is made of the same material in which the cards were wrapped. It even features a new pack of cards at the end.

Maus creator Art Spiegelman provides the introduction, stating that his work on the GPKs had to remain anonymous because he didn't want it to undermine *Maus*, which began around that time and was getting positive mainstream media attention, along with *Batman: The Dark Knight* and *Watchmen*. This book, while interesting, is for die-hard GPKs fans only.

— Kurt Anthony Krug

www.abramsbooks.com
ISBN: 978-1419702709

Zita the Space Girl ★★★★

First Second
$10.99, color, 192 pgs.
Writer and artist: Ben Hatke

You never know how far you will go for a friend until you accidentally zap him across the galaxy in an instant teleportation device. Young Zita is unfortunate enough to have sent her friend Joseph to another planet and, out of love and dedication, she follows him. Once through the portal, Zita learns Joseph was kidnapped and is in danger. She befriends a tinker named Piper, a giant mouse, a sentient and heavily armed battle orb, and Randy the Robot. Oh, one *more* thing goes wrong: The planet will be hit by an asteroid in a matter of days.

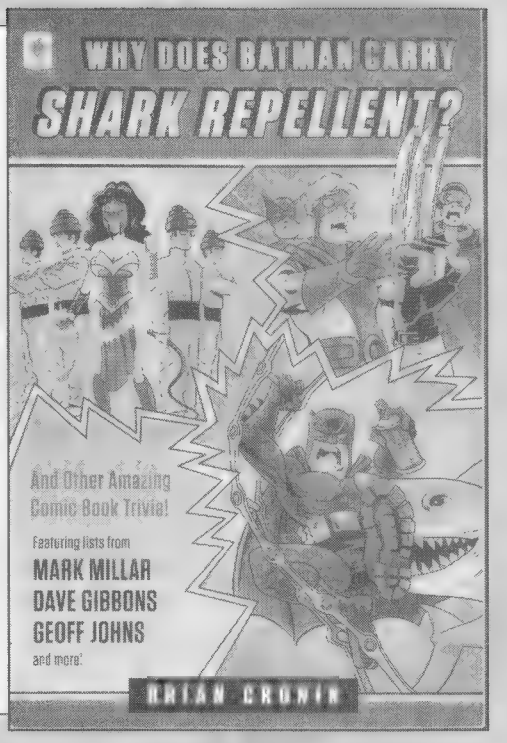
On first reading, *Zita the Space Girl* seems to have an average plot: Kids go to a distant planet, try to get home, and foil evil while making lifelong friends. Forget such preconceived misconceptions, because, while Zita fills the mold, she also breaks it. The characters are unsure, but their confidence grows. Even though a new cast member is added in every chapter, each contributes to the story's plot and pushes it at an exciting pace. The drawings stand out all on their own, falling between Jeff Smith's simplicity (as seen in *Bone*) and Kazu Kibushi's adventure (as seen in *Amulet*). If Ben Hatke keeps writing strong comics like this, he might be on his way to the next popular title for children.

— Whitney Grace

www.firstsecondbooks.com
ISBN: 978-1596434462

Why Does Batman Carry Shark Repellent? ★★★

Plume
$15, b/w, 264 pgs.
Writer: Brian Cronin



If you expect this book to explain why Batman carries shark repellent — something he does in both the comics and in the 1966 *Batman* movie — don't get your hopes up. That item appears as part of a list of unusual items The Caped Crusader carries on his belt. That's right: *Why Does Batman Carry Shark Repellent?* is a book of lists. (Cronin is also the author of *Was Superman a Spy?* — a collection of his weekly *Comic Book Legends Revealed* blog at *Comic Book Resources.com*.)

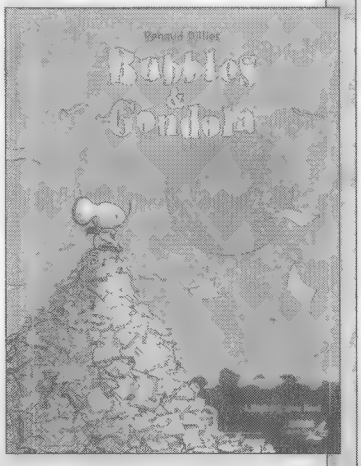
Some of the lists (such as the Top 10 Comic-Book Writers of All Time) are the results of polls. Others are more subjective, such as "Five Best Stories Starring Peter David's Very Badass Gray Hulk" by Zeb Wells. The lists are divided into six sections: comics characters, creators, storylines, "beyond the panels" (covers, ads, *etc.*), comics and culture (Six Bob Dylan References in Comic Books), and comic-book movies and TV shows. Among these categories, there is enough to tickle even the most diehard comics enthusiast and there is bound to be enough new information to enlighten even the most seasoned connoisseur.

— Jack Abramowitz

www.penguin.com
ISBN 978-0-452-29784-5

Bubbles & Gondola ★★★½

NBM
$16.99, color, 80 pgs.
Writer and artist: Renaud Dillies



With his brilliant sophomore graphic novel, France's Renaud Dillies crafts a poignant anthropomorphic charmer that mirrors our own quiet desperations to create, to be relevant, and to be understood. Charlie the mouse is a blocked writer, struggling to produce his second novel. Faced with inspirational situations and unable to recognize them for their creative potential, he succumbs to crippling self-doubt.

Enter Solitude, a bird who literally alights on the window frame to gradually break through the layers of creative paralysis and ever-so-gently push Charlie to higher levels of expression. While we are never sure whether Solitude exists in our world or solely as a helpful construct of a blocked imagination, his welcome impact on Charlie is immediate and thought-provoking.

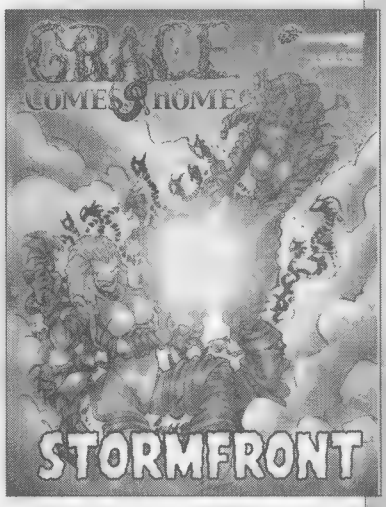
Dillies' engaging cartooning style is a nod to *Krazy Kat*, and he paces the book with a categorical whimsy that is simultaneously well-plotted and fanciful. As Charlie opens up his imagination, so Dillies adds depth to his panels, adding complexity and warmth, as readers cheer for Charlie and celebrate his purposeful climb to inspiration.

— Karen O'Brien

www.nbmpublishing.com

Grace Comes Home: Stormfront ★★★

Darkbrain Comics
$19.99, color, 156 pgs.
Writers and artists: Various



Welcome to Olathe, Kansas, new home to a pair of super-powered, interstellar beings who seek to annihilate each other — and possibly the world. Or perhaps they used to be human. Part of what's so good about this printed volume of the 11-part webcomic is that it's unknown who's the bad guy, who's the good guy, or even if either of the empowered beings actually fits such categories.

The pace moves well, the rotation of writers and artists comes off with minimal problems, and the overall story is entertaining — all told within the usual Darkbrain adults-only flair. The art on part two, provided by Nelson Daniel, is particularly impressive. On the downside, the story is occasionally difficult to follow, in large part due to often-confusing layouts. Also, the font is too small, making reading all the more arduous at times, due to use of colors that don't contrast well.

Still, *Grace Comes Home: Stormfront* is an enjoyable magazine-sized book that provides lots of reading, especially for the price.

— Ray Sidman

www.darkbrain.com

Avengers: The Origin ★★★

Marvel

$14.99, color, 120 pgs.
Writer: Joe Casey
Artist: Phil Noto

We all know the story of how The Avengers formed: Loki framed The Hulk for a crime he didn't commit, prompting Rick Jones to radio (email in this updated retelling) The Fantastic Four. Loki magically redirected the message to reach Thor, hoping Hulk would kill him. However, it inadvertently reached The Wasp, Ant-Man I (Hank Pym), and Iron Man. They teamed up, defeated Loki, and banded together as a team.

This happened in 1963's *Avengers* #1 by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. However, by today's standards, that "Done in One" issue can be considered dated. Here, writer Joe Casey and artist Phil Noto modernize the origin of Earth's Mightiest Heroes, expanding on certain elements, adding more layers, and fleshing out the relationships of the characters.

They do a fabulous job building on and respecting the classic work of Lee and Kirby. Casey always had a knack for ironing out continuity kinks. To make this story even more enjoyable, be sure to read it back-to-back with Casey's *Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes* Vol. 1, which occurs just after *Avengers: The Origin.*

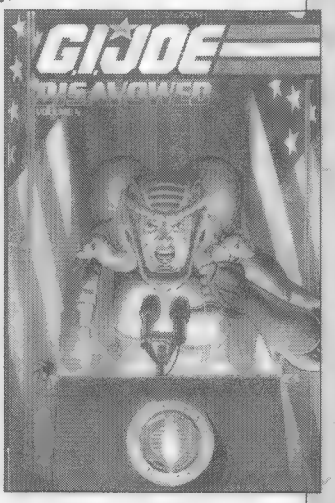
— Kurt Anthony Krug

Reprints: *Avengers: The Origin* #1-5
www.marvel.com
ISBN: 978-0785144007

G.I. Joe Disavowed Vol. 4 ★★★

IDW

$19.99, color, 162 pgs.
Writers: Josh Blaylock, Brandon Jerwa
Artists: Mike Zeck, John Beatty, *et al.*



In Marvel's *G.I. Joe, A Real American Hero,* the 21st issue was the "silent issue," one of the title's most popular stories, as Snake-Eyes battled Storm Shadow. When Devil's Due had the rights to *G.I. Joe* and reached its 21st issue, it kept tradition alive with another "silent issue" — which is reprinted here — as Snake-Eyes battled Storm Shadow. Artists Mike Zeck and John Beatty (*Spider-Man: Kraven's Last Hunt*) illustrate this high-octane, pulse-pounding action story that lives up to its predecessor.

In subsequent chapters, Serpentor is back from the dead and launches attacks on G.I. Joe and Cobra alike. Many Joes are slaughtered in these attacks — and not just nameless, faceless Green Shirts. In the end, Cobra Commander fights Serpentor, proving he's not the sniveling joke he was made out to be in the 1980s cartoon. Writers Brandon Jerwa and Josh Blaylock's love for these characters show on each page, as they write with a strong sense of continuity and throw in a few elements from the cartoon.

— Kurt Anthony Krug

Reprints: *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero* (Devil's Due) #20-26
www.idwpublishing.com
ISBN: 9781613770467

Mal and Chad: The Biggest, Bestest Time Ever! ★★★½

Philomel

$9.99, b/w, 224 pgs.
Writer: Aaaaa Aaaaa; Artist: Aaaaa Aaaaa

Writer and artist: Stephen McCraine

The life of a boy genius is never easy, rife with adventure and amazing inventions — except Mal's not your average boy genius. He hides his intelligence from his mom and classmates, because he simply wants to be a kid and not deal with such grown-up things as college. Along with his talking dog, Chad (the only one who knows his secret), he explores what type of job Mal would like to have when he does grow up. They scuba dive in the kitchen sink, time travel in a converted elevator to the dinosaur age, and work on a rocket. Mal's still only a kid, though, and he makes plenty of mistakes, especially when distracted by his crush.

Few boy-genius archetypes thrill the imagination these days, but Mal is a different kind. He is human despite all his brains; he makes mistakes, has a sense of humor, and suffers from the need to fit in among his peers. To top it off, he's a nice guy and doesn't rub his smarts in anyone's face. Pacing, art, story, and character development are all top-grade, and, since this book gives the critical eye a rest, readers can sit back and have fun — which is exactly what Mal wants to do.

— Whitney Grace

http://us.penguingroup.com/static/pages/publishers/yr/philomel.html
ISBN: 978-0399252211

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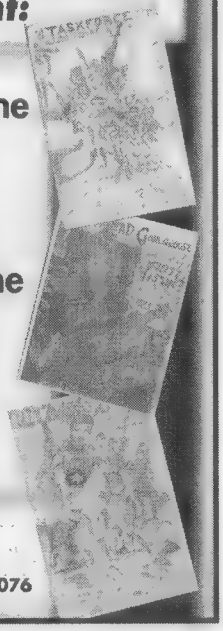

Darren Linzie – DL Comics
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Late July brings pop-culture extravaganza to Beverly Hills

Heritage presents four-day series of summer sales

by BRENT FRANKENHOFF

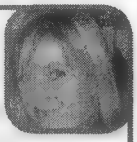
As part of a four-day pop-culture blitz at its Beverly Hills gallery July 24-27, Heritage Auctions set aside July 26 and 27 for a two-day comics Signature Sale. A music and entertainment memorabilia sale is scheduled for July 24, and July 25 is the date for a movie posters and collectibles sale.

Nearly 2,700 lots of comics and comics-related items are scheduled to be sold during the multiple sessions of the comics sale — and a pair of massive collections will be offered as part of the event.

A high-grade Silver Age Marvel collection, dubbed the Doug Schmell/Pedigree Comics.com Collection, has the highest-CGC-graded or one of the highest-graded copies of nearly every issue offered, according to the CGC census. Complete runs of numerous key series are offered, including:

- *Avengers* #1-100 (89 are graded 9.8 (Near Mint/Mint), while the remaining 11 are all graded 9.6 (Near Mint+). The first issue is the Pacific Coast Pedigree copy.)
- *Daredevil* #1-100 (90 are graded 9.8, with the remaining 10 graded 9.6. The #1 is the Twin Cities Pedigree copy.)
- *Fantastic Four* #1-102 (94 are graded 9.8 or 9.6.)
- *Journey into Mystery* #83-125 (40 are graded 9.8 or 9.6.)
- *Strange Tales* #101-168 (64 are graded 9.8 or 9.6.)
- *Tales of Suspense* #39-99 (all are graded 9.8 or 9.6.)

ATOMIC AVENUE ANALYSIS



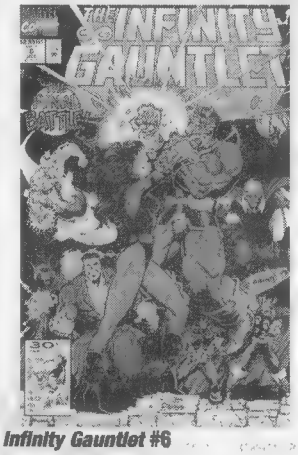
Carolyn Bickford,
ComicBase/Atomic Avenue

The Avengers movie has ignited interest in Marvel character Thanos, heating up sales of the 1991 series *Infinity Gauntlet*. However, due to enthusiasm and large print runs at the time, most sellers carried deep inventory which is just now clearing via today's online marketplaces. This kept prices in check, and realized sales actually caused a *drop* in value for *Infinity Gauntlet* #6 (Dec 91), from $2 to $1.50. This month will reveal whether collectors go after the remaining books or whether the market is saturated enough to keep values stable.

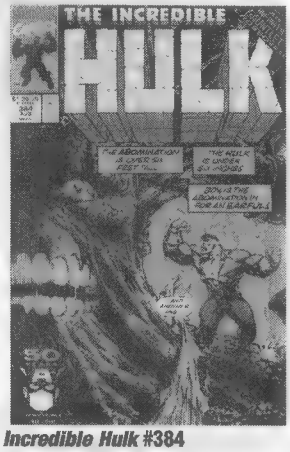
Another issue was more driven by sellers' price changes: *Incredible Hulk* #384 (Aug 91) more than doubled in value; however, as with *Infinity Gauntlet*, sellers are heavily stocked with issues for much less.

Zombie fever continues with later issues of *The Walking Dead* continuing to sell out and doubling their value.

*— **Carolyn Bickford** is the administrator for **Atomic Avenue** (**www.atomicavenue.com**), where you can find the comics you're looking for. She lives in San Jose, Calif., with her husband, **ComicBase** creator Peter Bickford; her two lovely children; and a whole lot of comic books. **CBG** maintains a strategic alliance with ComicBase.*



***Infinity Gauntlet* #6**
April's NM price: $2
May's NM price: $1.50



***Incredible Hulk* #384**
April's NM price: $3
May's NM price: $6.50

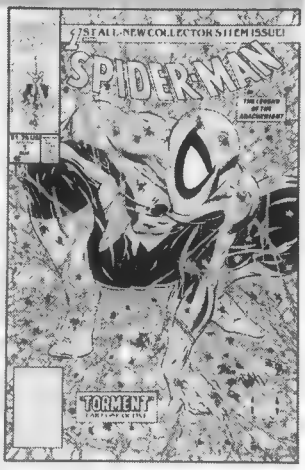
***Walking Dead* #44**
April's NM price: $2
May's NM price: $6.50

***Walking Dead* #50**
April's NM price: $2.75
May's NM price: $8.50

What is CGC?

CGC is the abbreviation for Certified Guaranty Company, an independent grading firm that evaluates comics, gives them a condition grade based on strict criteria and a 10-point scale, and then encapsulates the comic book in a hard plastic holder with the grade prominently displayed. This independent grading levels the playing field for buyers and sellers by establishing a grade that both can agree on and trust. More information is available at *www.cgccomics.com*.

• *Tales to Astonish* #36-101 (64 are graded 9.8 or 9.6.)
• *Thor* #126-200 (72 are graded 9.8, while the other three are graded 9.6.)
• *X-Men* #1-66 (61 are graded 9.8, while the others are graded 9.6. The copy of #1 is from the Pacific Coast pedigree.)



The other large collection in the sale is The Shamus Modern Masterworks Collection of original art. Of special interest to fans of 1980s and 1990s comics, these pieces include work by John Byrne, Jim Lee, Joe Quesada, Dale Keown, Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Mike Zeck, Mark Texeira, Mark Bagley, and Jae Lee. The featured item from this collection is the original cover art for *Spider-Man* #1 (Aug 90) by McFarlane.

Other items in the sale include the original art by Jack Kirby and Chic Stone for the splash page of *Fantastic Four Annual* #2 (1964) and a copy of *All-American Comics* #16 (Jul 40), CGC-graded 3.0 (Good/Very Good).

Online bidding for the sale begins July 7. For more information and to see other lots in the sale, visit *http://comics.ha.com*.

Cushlamochree! Early Barnaby!

While putting together her column on Fantagraphics' *Barnaby* reprint project (see Page 54), Maggie researched currently asked prices for earlier *Barnaby* reprints.

Barnaby (Blue Ribbon Books, 1943, HC) ($13-$130)
Barnaby (Henry Holt, 1943, HC, dj) ($19-$283)
Barnaby and Mr. O'Malley (Henry Holt, 1944, dj) ($13-$204)
Barnaby Quarterly #1 (New York Civil Service Publications, 1945, pb, 98 pp.) ($44-$119)
Barnaby Quarterly #2 (New York Civil Service Publications, 1945, pb, 98 pp.) ($49-$55)
Barnaby Quarterly #3 (New York Civil Service Publications, 1946, pb, 98 pp.) ($69)
Barnaby (Dover TPB, early 1960s)($14-$102)
Barnaby and Mr. O'Malley (Dover TPB, 1960s or 1970s) ($33-$85)
Barnaby #1: Wanted: A Fairy Godfather (Del Rey/Ballantine) ($24-$205)
Barnaby #2: Mr. O'Malley and the Haunted House (Del Rey/Ballantine, 1985) ($22-$57)
Barnaby #3: Jackeen J. O'Malley for Congress (Del Rey/Ballantine, 1986) ($21-$60)
Barnaby #4: Mr. O'Malley Goes for the Gold (Del Rey/Ballantine, 1986) ($29-$205)
Barnaby #5: Mr. O'Malley, Wizard of Wall Street (Del Rey/Ballantine, 1986) ($17-$129)
Barnaby #6: J.J. O'Malley Goes Hollywood (Del Rey/Ballantine, 1986) ($42-$205)

CBG TRENDWATCHER

Steve Mortensen,
Miracle Comics

I've been asked on a number of occasions why I prefer to specialize in 1980s-1990s comics, instead of focusing on older back issues. I like older comics, too, and collect *Conan* and Bronze Age horror. I started collecting comics back in the early 1980s, and the stories and covers from that era bring back fond memories to me.

There's also the affordability factor. I don't have the cash to buy an *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (Aug 62), but a *New Mutants* #98 (Feb 91) in CGC 9.8 is affordable for $300-$350. Many key issues in that era are still available for less than $300. Some examples include *Sandman* #1 (Jan 89) CGC 9.8 for $170; *Transformers* #1 (Sep 84) CGC 9.8 for $130; *G.I. Joe, A Real American Hero* #1 (Jun 82) CGC 9.8 for $170; *Batman: The Dark Knight* #1 (Mar 86) CGC 9.8 for $271; *Witchblade* #1 (Nov 95) CGC 9.8 for $100; and *Wolverine (Vol. 1)* #1 (Sep 82) CGC 9.8 for $150.

1980s and 1990s comics are what I know, and many investment gurus proclaim, "Buy what you know." I've tried to stick to that — as well as expand my horizons to include Bronze and Silver Age comics. I made a rare purchase at the San Jose Big Wow show in May by buying a low-grade copy of *Tales to Astonish* #27 (Jan 62), the first appearance of Ant-Man. I've always wanted the issue and didn't feel like shelling out too much money for it but I wanted one that wasn't restored. Not wanting to leave the convention empty-handed, I bought an ungraded copy for $250. I've since sent it in to CGC and I'm expecting it will grade about a CGC 1.0 with, I hope, a blue label. (I rarely buy Silver Age comics ungraded because I'm not confident enough in my restoration-detection skills to spot a comic that has been tampered with.)

There are quite a few newer collections out there that are ungraded and yielding CGC 9.8 quality books. The problem is that this has created an excess of supply for these issues. A good example is *Transformers* #1 in CGC 9.8. About five years ago, I bought a collection of eight CGC 9.8-graded copies. I was able to sell them for $500 each. Now that more have entered the marketplace, it has driven prices down to the $130 mark. I think that at some point things are going to level off and prices for issues like this will begin to turn upward again.

Despite the drop in prices and the excess supply, I'm still able to turn a profit, and that's fun. There's also little competition in the modern market because margins and prices are low. The high-end dealers don't want to bother with graded modern comics unless they are in CGC 9.9 or 10.0. In the past two years of submitting, I think I've sent in about 1,000 books for grading to CGC — and only received *one* CGC 9.9: a *Simpsons Comics Presents Bart Simpson* #1 (Aug 00). It did sell for a nice price of around $200!

*— **Steve Mortensen** runs **Miracle Comics** (**www.miraclecomics.com**) and has been writing for **CBG** since 2004. He can be reached at **steve@stevemortensen.com**.*

CBG TRENDWATCHER

Michael Tierney, Collector's Edition

May was a monster for both new and old comic sales, ranking as the third best May in my 30 years of retailing. But, to keep it in perspective, those sales were still only around 60% of my best May ever — way back in 1993.

Back issues keep on booming. There were no big sales, just a lot of activity. I'd recently added the full inventory line of E.C. Comics from the William Gaines estate warehouse, and their demand has been hot.

There were a couple of surprises with new comics. By themselves, *Doctor Who* and *Star Trek* comics sell only marginally. But, when The Doctor teamed up with the crew of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, the first issue was an instant sellout. I thought I'd ordered heavily on this title, but fan interest instantly generated sales that were multiples of what these titles sell individually. The Doctor beamed right off the shelves!

"The Night of the Owls" crossover story in the Batman line also saw a boost in sales for all related titles.

Another surprise from DC was how *Earth Two* #1 substantially outsold *World's Finest* #1, as customers were anxious to see this Golden Age world again. (This was all before the announcement about the G.A. Green Lantern changing his sexual orientation after 70-plus years.) Along those lines: Archie's new *Kevin Keller* title didn't sell a single copy at either store after the first issue.

The biggest news of the month was the continued excitement stirred up by the *Avengers* movie. Nearly everyone commented on the movie's humor and how much fun it had been to watch. Even the commercials showed a smiling Hulk, which people found inviting. "Grim and gritty" has become stale, when there are no highs to balance out a story's lows.

Thanks to his brief appearance in the *Avengers* movie, Thanos is currently Marvel's hottest character. But the *Avengers* comics themselves are seeing only modest demand, since moviegoers still think of the characters as individuals and don't realize that there is an actual title called *Avengers*. Last year's *Thor* generated far more comics sales for a movie-related title.

Avengers vs. X-Men is Marvel's top seller and has been bringing in new customers, while the tie-ins (which customers initially said they wouldn't buy) have done very well.

Marvel's biggest bomb was *Marvel Zombies Destroy*.

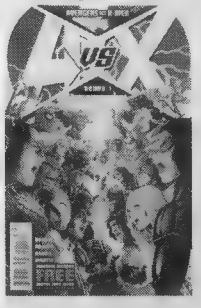
But zombies are still popular, as *The Walking Dead* continues to bring in new customers for the graphic novels. The TV series initially generated no sales, because it was advertised as "based on the graphic novel," with no mention of comics as magazines, so no one thought about its being available in a comics store. The way I turned that around was by running my own TV ads on the show, which turned out to be a phenomenally good move.

— ***Michael Tierney*** *runs* ***Collector's Edition*** *in North Little Rock and* ***The Comic Book Store*** *in Little Rock, Ark. He can be reached at* ***cbsrock@swbell.net*** *or* ***(501) 791-4222.***

CBG TRENDWATCHER

John Tinkess, Another Dimension

I'm sure I'm starting to sound like a broken record, but sales were phenomenal once again in May. Following a record-setting Free Comic Book Day, May ended up being the second-busiest month in our history, behind only last December. It's hard to say exactly where all these new customers are coming from, but, this month, a good chunk of them were the result of the success of the movie of *The Avengers*. In the past, we've never really seen much impact from major comic-book movies. Such lesser-known concepts as *Ghost World*, *Scott Pilgrim*, and *Sin City* have always given a big boost to the sales of those titles, but we've never been able to say the same for such properties as Spider-Man, Batman, or Iron Man. *The Avengers* seems to have finally bucked that trend, as *Avengers vs. X-Men* is by far our best-selling title right now, and the *Infinity Gauntlet* trade paperback sold *Walking Dead*-like numbers this month. *Avengers vs. X-Men* #1-4 took four of our Top 13 spots this month, while DC also had a strong showing with the debut of *Earth Two*. *Saga* remained in the Top 10 and is easily our top-selling non-Marvel/DC title.



The only disappointment this month would be the lack of interest in *Astonishing X-Men* #50. The issue featuring Northstar's marriage proposal to his boyfriend, Kyle, was touted as a big media event, but sales have been only marginally above average. With DC jumping on the bandwagon with Golden Age Green Lantern Alan Scott coming out in *Earth Two* #2, one wonders how long it will be before we see a backlash from the general public against such blatant marketing gimmicks. These stories seem to be much more about grabbing attention than about same-sex rights or alternative lifestyles.

One big surprise this month has been the rapid sales of *Darth Vader and Son* by Jeffrey Brown. We've always had solid followings for *Star Wars* and Jeffrey Brown, but this charming book about the Skywalker family has been flying off the shelves.

Top Comics for May

Avengers vs. X-Men #3
Batman #9
Avengers vs. X-Men #4
Justice League #9
Earth Two #1
Detective Comics #9
Avengers vs. X-Men #2
Saga #3
Batman & Robin #9
Wolverine and The X-Men #10
Amazing Spider-Man #685
Green Lantern #9
Avengers vs. X-Men #1
Action Comics #9
AvX Versus #2
Batgirl #9
New Avengers #26
Batman Incorporated #1
Nightwing #9
Uncanny X-Men #12
World's Finest #1
Avengers #26
Batman: The Dark Knight #9
Avengers Assemble #3
Amazing Spider-Man #686
Daredevil #12
Batman Annual #1
Avengers vs. X-Men #0
Uncanny X-Force #25
Daredevil #13

— ***John Tinkess*** *runs* ***Another Dimension*** *in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. He can be reached at* ***comics@another-dimension.com*** *or* ***(403) 283-7078.***

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California

Every Wed. and Sat. CA, City Of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave. SH: 3pm-9pm. A: Free. T: 250. Johnny, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA, 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Oct 13-14 CA, San Francisco. Alternative Press Expo (APE). Concourse Exhibition Center, 635 8th St. Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA, 92112. PH: 619-491-2475.

Connecticut

Sep 9 CT, Manchester. Comic, Coin & Sports Card Show. East Catholic High School, 115 New State Rd. SH: 9am-2pm. A: $.99. Natale. PH: 860-803-0810.

Oct 14 CT, Manchester. Comic, Coin & Sports Card Show. East Catholic High School, 115 New State Rd. SH: 9am-2pm. A: $.99. Natale. PH: 860-803-0810.

Illinois

Aug 19 IL, Springfield. ComicCon. Route 66 Hotel & Conference Center, 625 E. Saint Joseph St. SH: 10am-4pm. A: Free. Alan. PH: 309-657-1599 or www.epguides.com/comics.

Oct 14 IL, Chicago. Toys, Comics & Statues Convention. Holiday Inn of Midway Airport, 6624 South Cicero. SH: 8am-3pm. A: $4. Leo Guerrero. PH: 773-242-0041 or t-c-s@inbox.com.

Indiana

Aug 25 IN, Fort Wayne. Comic Book Convention. Comfort Suites, 5775 Coventry Ln. SH: 10am-4pm. A: Free. Alan. PH: 309-657-1599 or www.epguides.com/comics.

Aug 26 IN, Indianapolis. Comic Book Show. Ramada Inn, 6990 E. 21st St. SH: 9:30am-3:30pm. A: $4. T: 60. Andy Holzman. PH: 317-824-9602 or www.epguides.com/comics.

Maryland

Sep 8-9 MD, Baltimore. Comic-Con. Convention Ctr., 1 W. Pratt St. baltimorecomiccon.com

Michigan

Sep 23 MI, Livonia. X-trava Con. Knights of Columbus Hall, 19801 Farmington Rd. SH: 10am-4pm. A: $3. F: $55-$60. PH: 248-426-8059.

Minnesota

Sep 9 MN, Mounds View. Twin Cities ComiCon. Mermaid Entertainment Center, 2200 Hwy. 10. SH: 10am-4pm. A: Free. Alan. PH: 309-657-1599 or www.epguides.com/comics.

Oct 6 MN, St. Paul. MCBA Falicon Comic Book Party. Minnesota State Fairgrounds, Education Building, 1265 Snelling Ave North. SH: 10am-4pm. mncba@aol.comwww.midwestcomicbook.com

New Jersey

Aug 24-26 NJ, Wildwood. Comic Book Show. Convention Center, 4501 Broadwalk. SH: Fri. 3pm-9pm, Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 10am-5pm. A: Free. T: 125. F: $175. Rob or Karen Gomberg, 3 Rachel Court, Franklin Park, NJ, 08823. PH: 732-422-9365 or robkarpro@comcast.net.

Sep 23 NJ, Secaucus. Comic Art Con. Meadowlands Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2 Harmon Plaza. SH: 10am-4:30pm. Joe Veteri. PH: 973-768-6649 or Dan Gallo, PH: 954-547-9063 or joe@comicartshowcase.com.

New York

Oct 11-14 NY, New York. Comic Con. Jacob K. Javitz Convention Center, 655 W. 34th St. Reed Exhibitions, 383 Main Ave., Norwalk, CT, 06851. PH: 203-840-4800 or www.nycc.com.

North Carolina

Aug 26 NC, Raleigh. Comic Book Show. Holiday Inn Crabtree, 4100 Glenwood Ave. SH: 10am-4pm. A: Free. Lyn Anderson, PO Box 99201, Raleigh, NC, 27624. PH: 919-844-1758.

Sep 22-23 NC, Raleigh. Toy, Hobby & Sportscard Show. State Fairgrounds, Kerr Scott Bldg., 1025 Blue Ridge Rd. SH: Sat. 9am-4pm, Sun. 10am-4pm. A: $5-$7. T: 175. Inside Pitch Promotions, Wes Starkey. PH: 540-593-3736 or wes@swva.net.

Ohio

Sep 29-30 OH, Columbus. Mid-Ohio-Con. Greater Columbus Convention Center, Battelle Hall, 400 North High St. Wizard World Conventions, Courney McVicker, 1010 Avenue of the Americas, 3rd Floor, New York, NY, 10018. PH: 646-380-2477.

Oct 14 OH, Cleveland. Comic, Card & Nostalgia Show. American Legion Hall, 22001 Brookpark Rd. SH: 10am-4pm. A: $4. T: 40. F: $65-$75. Jeff Harper, PO Box 1371, Locust Grove, VA, 22508. PH: 540-412-2879.

Pennsylvania

Aug 19 PA, Essington-Philadelphia. Comic Con. Ramada Airport, 76 Industrial Hwy. SH: 10am-4pm. A: $3. F: $70. Derek Woywood. PH: 856-217-5737 or dwoywood@yahoo.com.

Virginia

Aug 18 VA, Salem. 15th Annual Virginia Vintage Comics & Collectibles Show. Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Blvd. SH: 10am-5pm. A: $2. T: 50. F: $50. Alum Ridge Industries, Roger Mannon, 717 Harris Hollow Road SW, Floyd, VA. PH: 540-789-7056 or PH: 540-745-2127.

Aug 26 VA, Tysons Corner. Comic Book Show. Crowne Plaza, 1960 Chain Bridge Rd. SH: 10am-3:30pm. A: $3. T: 30. F: $65. Nick Shoff. PH: 301-990-4929.

Sep 16 VA, Richmond. Virginia Comicon. Crowne Plaza West , 6531 West Broad St. SH: 10am-3:30pm. http://vacomicon.com

Wisconsin

Sep 8 WI, Madison. ComicCon. Howard Johnson Plaza, 3841 E. Washington. SH: 10am-4pm. A: Free. Alan. PH: 309-657-1599 or www.epguides.com/comics.

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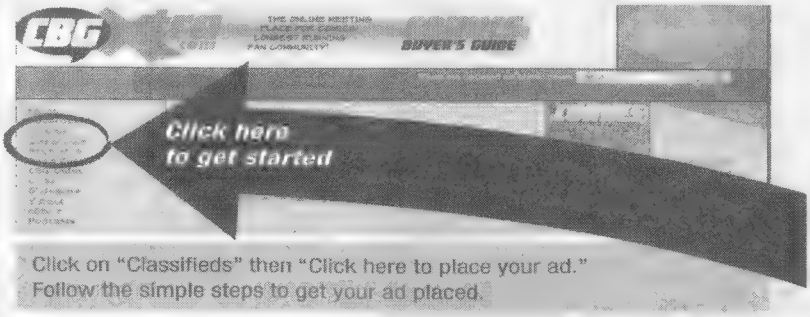

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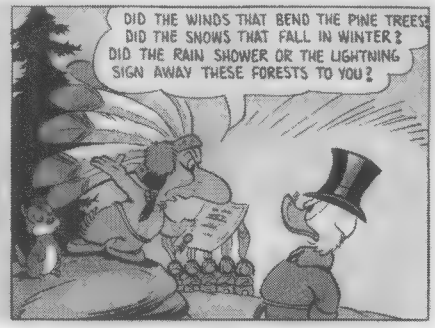
DESIRING DISNEY DUCKS

Dana Gabbard
3010 Wilshire Blvd., #362
Los Angeles, CA 90010

I very much enjoyed Michelle Nolan's ode to the Junior Woodchucks in ***CBG*** #1691 ("Junior Woodchucks to the Rescue!"). I always thought it showed keen insight on Gold Key Editor Chase Craig's part to offer the scripting of Junior Woodchucks to Carl Barks in the early 1970s. It was clear at that point that The Duck Man had burned out on writing Donald and Scrooge as leads (as exemplified by the uninspired three Donald stories he wrote after retiring — yikes!). But doing a series with The Woodchucks as the stars was a new challenge, and I think the stories quickly show Barks (whose interest in ecology can be discerned as early as "Land of the Pygmy Indians" (*Uncle Scrooge* #18, Jun 57) engaged and enjoying a chance to write about a topic that was contemporary. While he was less than enamored of modern society, Barks was always interested in addressing the here and now. I also think Scrooge's acquisition ethic isn't a very good fit with the warm and fuzzy '70s, which ironically makes him a great foil to the Woodchucks.

BY WHOM WAS THIS TOKEN GIVEN?
BY WHOSE HANDS THESE WRITTEN SCRATCHES?
DID THE SUN FROM HIGH ABOVE YOU
SELL YOU ALL THESE LANDS AND WATERS?


DID THE WINDS THAT BEND THE PINE TREES?
DID THE SNOWS THAT FALL IN WINTER?
DID THE RAIN SHOWER OR THE LIGHTNING
SIGN AWAY THESE FORESTS TO YOU?

Recently the impossible happened — Joe Torcivia declared on his blog (*http://tiahblog.blogspot.com/*) that he has quit buying new comics. This is partly involuntary, because, since Boom! stopped publishing Disney comics with the classic characters (Mickey, Donald, Scrooge, *etc.*) nobody has stepped forward to do them, leaving only the Fantagraphics Barks and Gottfredson

FOR ART'S SAKE

by Chris Smigliano

-SO WHAT HAPPENED HERE??
THE SHELVES I'VE BEEN USING TO DISPLAY THE LATEST DC COMICS CAME APART...
DC COMICS? OH, I GET IT!! NOW YOU'RE..
YES!! I'M PLAYING "FIFTY-TWO PICKUP!!" SATISFIED??
NO NEED TO GET SO TESTY..
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reprint projects as the currently published Disney comics. He *is* buying those but wrote that he wishes there were also a venue for other creators of stories with these classic creations. The other reason Joe has gone cold turkey is because DC's "New 52" in his view, "has been *good*, but overall not great. ... '*Good,*' I've determined, is not '*good enough*' for the continued expenditure and storage of product that has failed to thrill me as DC once did." I was floored when I heard this news. But not surprised. The past decade or so Joe has gradually expressed escalating dismay at the direction DC has taken. I guess he sees "The New 52" as providing a clear jumping-off point. And, given the quickly slumping sales (after the initial spike) of the new DC titles, I wonder if other folks feel the same.

'WHAT'S VVSS' REVISITED

Greg Holland
greg@valiantfans.com

In ***CBG*** #1691, pages 48-49, Ray Higdon asked what "VVSS" stood for. Unfortunately, Brent's answer was wrong.

Valiant's "VVSS" notation actually referred to the "Valiant Validated Signature Series." The Valiant Validated Signature Series were signed versions of regular-edition Valiant comics that were embossed with a circular seal and included a VVSS COA from Valiant (as opposed to all of the other third-party COAs of the day for signed comics).

Yes, there was a Valiant Vision Starter Kit (not Set), as Brent mentioned, but it was the polybagged Valiant issue with cardboard glasses. No other issues were polybagged with glasses, and the reader specifically says the VVSS reference is next to comics in the price guide.

The first result of a Google search for "Valiant VVSS" brings you to one of the pages on my website (ValiantFan.com): *http://www.valiantfan.com/valiant/vvsstitle.asp*.

I don't think Higdon got the answer he needed, but it's an easy fix and I'm sure he would love to see his name in print a second time.

Brent: *And the editor (me) should have used Google, as well, when crafting the answer in the first place. I thought I knew the answer off the top of my head and went with it. Now I know better. Thanks, Greg!*

For good measure, reader Nathaniel Jaime also corrected my answer and pointed to your website as a resource. I'm adding it to my reference list of online bookmarks. My face is now as red as the color that pre-dominated in those Valiant Vision issues.

COULD DOCTOR WHO MEET POPEYE?

Jack Abramowitz

For my own insidious reasons, I decided to try to connect Popeye with *Doctor Who*. Since neither Popeye nor The Doctor crosses over much, this required more steps and more forms of media than I would have liked. (One rule: only official crossovers. Popeye in the background of *X-Men* or Bluto dressing up as Superman don't count. Captain Britain in the background of *Doctor Who Magazine* #173 is presumably also non-canon.) Here's the best I could do:

- Popeye met The Phantom in the 1972 TV movie *Popeye Meets the Man Who Hated Laughter*
- The Phantom knows Captain Action (*Phantom/Captain Action* #1-2)
- Captain Action knows The Green Hornet (*Captain Action Winter Special* #1)
- The Green Hornet knows Batman (1966 *Batman* TV series)
- Batman knows The Legion of Super-Heroes (DC universe continuity, pre-"New 52")

FOR ART'S SAKE

by Chris Smigliano

WOAH! LOOKS LIKE THIS CONVENTION'S GOING TO HAVE SOME SERIOUS COSPLAY!!
WHAT IS YOURS BASED ON, BUDDY? ANIME? TRANSFORMERS? STEAMPUNK? IRON MAN??
ACTUALLY, I'M A CON VOLUNTEER...
—THIS IS WHAT WE'RE WEARING TO HELP CONTROL THE CROWDS!!
BACK OFF!!
STOP
CON '12
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FLASHBACKS

120 yrs Aug 16, 1892 Writer-artist **Hal Foster** is born. Despite the high quality of his work on the *Tarzan* comic strip, he remains best known for his creation of and work on the *Prince Valiant* comic strip.

120 yrs Aug 16, 1892 Animator **Otto Messmer** is born. He's the developer (perhaps the creator) of **Felix the Cat**.

110 yrs Aug 11, 1902 Golden Age artist **Jack Binder** is born. The brother of **Otto Binder**, he creates Lev Gleason's **Daredevil**, draws **Mary Marvel**, and is head of his own art studio.

105 yrs Aug 20, 1907 Radio performer and voice artist **Alan Reed** is born. He's best known as the voice of **Fred Flintstone**.

100 yrs Aug 25, 1912 Cartoonist **Ted Key** is born. He's best known for creating the *Hazel* cartoons for *The Saturday Evening Post* later continuing them for King Features.

95 yrs Aug 28, 1917 "King of the Comics" **Jack Kirby** is born. Born Jacob Kurtzberg, he writes, draws, and edits comics, co-creating (among countless others) **Captain America**, **The Fantastic Four**, and **The Silver Surfer** for Marvel — and his own universe for DC.

90 yrs Aug 27, 1922 Painter **Frank Kelly Freas** is born. His fantasy art is best known, but he also provided art for comics covers.

80 yrs Aug 24, 1932 Penciller, inker, and letterer **Jim Aparo** is born.

75 yrs Aug 28, 1937 Comic-strip pioneer and political cartoonist **Frederick Burr Opper** dies at age 80. He created *Happy Hooligan*, *Alphonse and Gaston*, and *And Her Name Was Maud*.

75 yrs Aug 29, 1937 German artist **Dieter Kalenbach** is born. He is known for his feature *Turi und Tolk*.

70 yrs Aug 2, 1942 Inker **Dave Hunt** is born.

70 yrs Aug 4, 1942 Writer, editor, researcher, and mathematician **Rick Norwood** is born. He is founder and editor of Manuscript Press, especially noted for the long-running *Comics Revue*.

70 yrs Aug 13, 1942 **Walt Disney**'s *Bambi* opens.

70 yrs Aug 1942 Dell's *Four-Color* line introduces the first **Carl Barks** comic-book story in **#9**: "Donald Duck Finds Pirate Gold." He co-creates it with **Jack Hannah**.

70 yrs Aug 1942 *Action Comics* **#51** introduces **The Prankster**.

70 yrs Aug 1942 *Detective Comics* **#66** introduces **Two-Face**.

65 yrs Aug 25, 1947 Award-winning artist **Michael Wm. Kaluta** is born. He is especially noted for his work on *Starstruck* and *The Shadow*.

65 yrs Aug 30, 1947 Writer-editor **Jack C. Harris** is born.

65 yrs Aug 1947 *Flash Comics* **#86** introduces **Black Canary**.

65 yrs Aug 1947 **The Huntress** makes her debut in *Sensation Comics* **#68**.

65 yrs Aug 1947 **Hedy Devine** is introduced in (yes) *Hedy Devine Comics* **#22**.

65 yrs Aug 1947 **Phantom Lady** is introduced in (yes, again) *Phantom Lady* **#13**.

65 yrs Aug 1947 Avon introduces **Leslie Charteris'** dashing British criminal **The Saint** to comic books in *The Saint* **#1**, which collects his comic-strip adventures.

60 yrs Aug 13, 1952 *Desert Peach* and *Stinz* artist-writer **Donna Barr** is born.

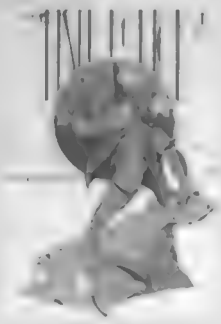
60 yrs Aug 23, 1952 Writer-artist **Terry Austin** is born.

60 yrs Aug 30, 1952 Award-winning letterer **Ken Bruzenak** is born.

60 yrs Aug 30, 1952 Writer **Rickey Shanklin** is born.

60 yrs Aug 1952 DC kicks off *Our Army at War*'s first issue.

55 yrs Aug 7, 1957 Artist **Mark Bagley** is born. He's known for work on such series as *Spider-Man*, *Thunderbolts*, and *Justice League of America*.



55 yrs Aug 9, 1957 Writer-artist **Steve Moncuse** is born. He creates *Fish Police*.

55 yrs Aug 1957 *Showcase* gives **Lois Lane** her own comic-book tryout with **#9**.

50 yrs Aug 25, 1962 Bongo Comics Managing Editor **Terry Delegeane** is born.

50 yrs Aug 1962 *Adventure* **#299** introduces **red kryptonite**.

50 yrs Aug 1962 *Journey into Mystery* **#83** introduces **Don Blake**, soon to become [*Spoiler Warning*?] **Thor**.

50 yrs Aug 1962 *Amazing Fantasy* **#15** introduces **Aunt May**, **Uncle Ben**, and — oh, yes — some kid, must have been their nephew, right? That'd be **Peter Parker**, who's involved with some character named **Spider-Man**.

45 yrs Aug 18, 1967 Award-winning writer **Brian Michael Bendis** is born. He begins his career writing and drawing *noir* crime comics and going on to write many series for Marvel.

45 yrs Aug 1967 *X-Men* **#35** introduces **Changeling**.

45 yrs Aug 1967 *Avengers* **#43** introduces **Red Guardian**.

45 yrs Aug 1967 *Strange Tales* **#159** introduces **Val**.

45 yrs Aug 1967 *America's Best TV Comics* is a

one-shot packaged by Marvel for ABC-TV to publicize the network's fall Saturday-morning programming — *Casper the Ghost*, *Fantastic Four*, *Spider-Man*, and *King Kong* — along with an ad for ABC's prime-time *Batman*.

40 yrs Aug 15, 1972 **Don and Maggie Thompson** begin their *Beautiful Balloons* column in **Alan L. Light**'s *The Buyer's Guide for Comic Fandom* **#19**.

40 yrs Aug 1972 *Marvel Spotlight* **#5** introduces **Johnny Blaze** and his alter ego, **Ghost Rider**, in a story by **Gary Friedrich** and **Michael Ploog**.

40 yrs Aug 1972 DC's *Justice League of America* **#100** revives **The Seven Soldiers of Victory** in a story written by **Len Wein** and drawn by **Dick Dillin** and **Joe Giella**.

35 yrs Aug 20, 1977 The *Johnny Hazard* newspaper strip written and drawn by **Frank Robbins** comes to an end.

35 yrs Aug 1977 *Iron Fist* **#14** introduces **Sabretooth**.

35 yrs Aug 1977 *Showcase* **#94** introduces **The Doom Patrol II**.

35 yrs Aug 1977 **The Chemical King** [*Spoiler Warning!*] dies in *Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes* **#228**.

35 yrs Aug 1977 *Men of War* **#1** introduces **Gravedigger**.

35 yrs Aug 1977 The infant son of **Aquaman** and **Mera** [Ak! Another *Spoiler Warning!*] dies in *Adventure Comics* **#452**.

30 yrs Aug 15, 1982 Cartoonist **Ernie Bushmiller** dies at age 76. He took over *Fritzi Ritz* from creator **Larry Whittington** and went on to make *Nancy* one of the most-read comic strips in America.

25 yrs Aug 1, 1987 **Carol Kalish** is promoted to the newly created Marvel Entertainment Group position of Vice President/Direct Sales.

25 yrs Aug 8, 1987 **Bob Wayne** joins the DC Comics staff in the newly created position of Retail Promotions Manager.

20 yrs Aug 1992 *Amazing Spider-Man* **#365** introduces **Spider-Man 2099** and reintroduces **Peter Parker's parents**.

20 yrs Aug 1992 *WILDC.A.T.s: Covert Action Teams* **#1** introduces **Wildcats**.

10 yrs Aug 5, 2002 Cartoonist **Richard "Grass" Green** dies of lung cancer at age 63. He'd created **Xal-Kor** and founded the art-board company REGCo.

5 yrs Aug 12, 2007 Artist **Mike Wieringo** dies of an aortic dissection at age 44.

- The Legion met the crew of Captain Kirk's *Enterprise* in *Star Trek/Legion of Super-Heroes* #1-6
- Members of Kirk's *Enterprise* have met the crew of Capt. Picard's *Enterprise* (*Star Trek* universe continuity)
- Captain Picard's *Enterprise* crew meets The Doctor in IDW's *Doctor Who/Star Trek: The Next Generation: Operation Assimilation* crossover mini-series.

Does anybody have a more elegant solution?

FCBD 2012 OFF LINE AND ON

Jay Roberts

Free Comic Book Day 2012 has come and gone and this year was a decent, if decidedly unsurprising, day for me. My brother and I had a new companion for our trip to my local shop, since his girlfriend joined the fun this year. We first visited New England Comics in New Bedford, Mass., where the shop was doing brisk business. They had artist Frankie B. Washington and horror-program host Penny Dreadful and Garou in the store for the event.

Once again, I was able to preorder a bunch of the FCBD books to give away on Halloween, so I'd been picking them up over the last couple of weeks. But I also grabbed some freebies on the day and picked up a trade in my own small effort of offsetting the cost of the "free" comics to the store.

With that store packed with people, we didn't stay too long there. Instead, we drove to the Newbury Comics location in North Dartmouth, Mass. Unfortunately, we were much too late when we arrived,

Last Kiss®
LastKissInc.com
John Lustig
Public Service Message from the FBIS!*
Escaped super villain Captain Charming has been seen in your area! (He's probably in your house right now!)
He's dangerous...and handsome! Remember, if you see him--*don't* marry him!
*Federal Bureau of Improbable Sex
Art by Vince Colletta Studio
I'M LOOKING FOR A *DASHING CROOK* IN A SKINTIGHT COSTUME WHO SPENDS *ALL* HIS MONEY ON *LOOSE WOMEN!*
GEE! ME TOO!
©2012 Last Kiss Inc.

and pretty much everything was gone. My brother and his girlfriend took advantage of a special DVD sale, but for me it was a bit of a wasted trip. Note to self: Go earlier next year.

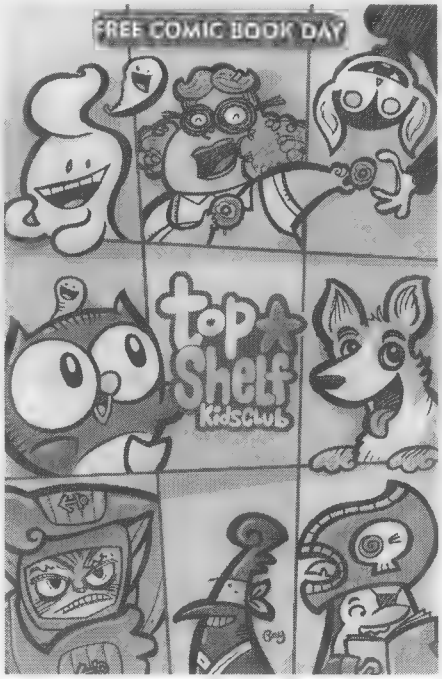
As for the comics I've read, here's rundown of what I thought:

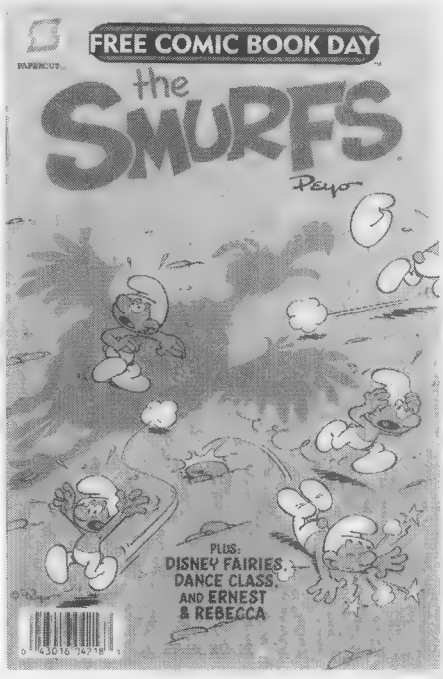
The **Top Shelf** offering featuring Owly, Korgi, and more is going to be perfectly fine for the youngest readers, but I thought it was weaker this year than in years past.

The two **Archie** comics titles were a Mega Man origin story that was OK but felt flat, and then there was the Sonic book. Each year, Archie puts out a Sonic comic book, and each year it ends up as one of my favorite comics of the FCBD event. This year was no exception. The story was wonderful, and the text pieces that followed filled in the events of that story even more. A home run!

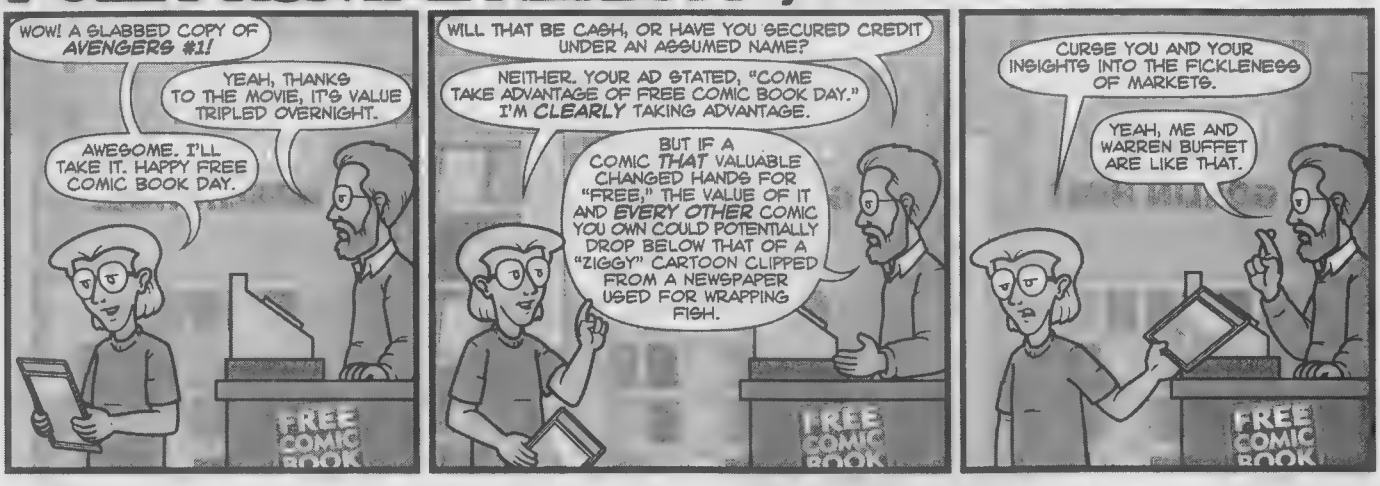
The Smurfs/Tinkerbell from **Papercutz** didn't do much for me, but I have a feeling girls will love the Tinkerbell stuff.

DC's *The New 52* was a mess, while its *Superman Family Adventures* issue featured three stories. The first was for the *Superman Family Adventures*. I found it to be another title that will be





FULL FRONTAL NERDITY by Aaron Williams


WOW! A SLABBED COPY OF AVENGERS #1!
YEAH, THANKS TO THE MOVIE, IT'S VALUE TRIPLED OVERNIGHT.
AWESOME. I'LL TAKE IT. HAPPY FREE COMIC BOOK DAY.
FREE COMIC BOOK
WILL THAT BE CASH, OR HAVE YOU SECURED CREDIT UNDER AN ASSUMED NAME?
NEITHER. YOUR AD STATED, "COME TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FREE COMIC BOOK DAY." I'M CLEARLY TAKING ADVANTAGE.
BUT IF A COMIC THAT VALUABLE CHANGED HANDS FOR "FREE," THE VALUE OF IT AND EVERY OTHER COMIC YOU OWN COULD POTENTIALLY DROP BELOW THAT OF A "ZIGGY" CARTOON CLIPPED FROM A NEWSPAPER USED FOR WRAPPING FISH.
FREE COMIC BOOK
CURSE YOU AND YOUR INSIGHTS INTO THE FICKLENESS OF MARKETS.
YEAH, ME AND WARREN BUFFET ARE LIKE THAT.
FREE COMIC BOOK

loved by younger readers but left this far older reader cold. The *Young Justice* brief story wasn't much to write home about. However, the *Green Lantern* piece was excellent. I only wish they'd used this type of art in the actual TV series.

Marvel's *Spider-Man Season One* was OK, and the idea of updating the origin tale for new readers is fine — but I don't need it, because I read the original tale. Meanwhile, the *Avengers: Age of Ultron* book was spectacular. Makes me want to read the story arc.

Archaia's hardcover offering featured four stories (Mouse Guard, Cow Boy, Labyrinth, and Return of the Dapper Men) that I liked and two stories (Rust and Cursed Pirate Girl) that didn't strike a chord with me.

Transformers Regeneration One #80.5: The story and art from **IDW** were well done. The issue made me want to read the new series as well as go back to read the original 80-issue series. (I only read a smattering of the comics when they were first published.)

The **Bongo** offering had a nice, enjoyable autobiographical piece by Sergio Aragonés. While I'm not into the whole SpongeBob SquarePants thing, the story in this issue actually amused me. The most disappointing part of the whole thing was that the Simpsons story was painful to slog my way through. Simpsons stories are usually pretty good, but this one was weak.

The **Oni Press** book *Bad Medicine* #1 was a great story. Nunzio Defillipis and Christina Weir have started something outstanding, I'd say. I'm not totally sold on the rough art but willing to go along with it as long as the story remains as good as that in the first issue. I added it to my pull list.

The two **Dark Horse** flipbooks were interesting. The *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* story was OK, but the confusing appearance of an alien creature made no sense. The *Guild* story was mildly amusing. The two books shared a four-page story called *Alabaster* which might have been a bit more interesting, if I'd known what was had led up to the tale's events. On its own, it was fine, but more clarity could have made it better. The *Star Wars* and *Serenity* stories were decent but strikingly similar. The main problem for the *Serenity* story was abysmal art.

Then, there's the ever-ready help the Internet provides when the opportunity arises.

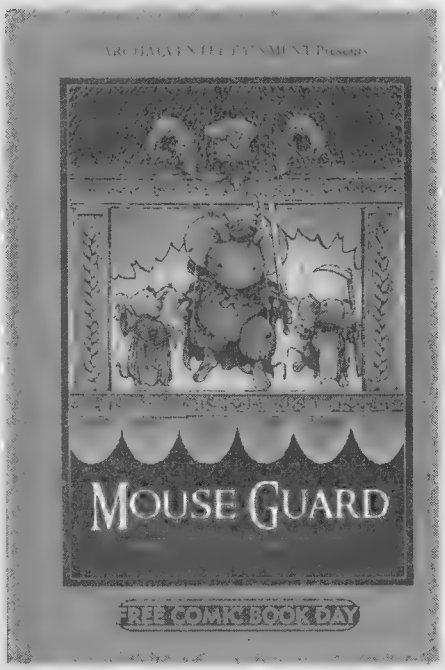
I was able to send some of the comics to the son of a poster on the Bendis Board who'd missed out on the offerings at his store. So, all in all, it was another great day to celebrate comics.

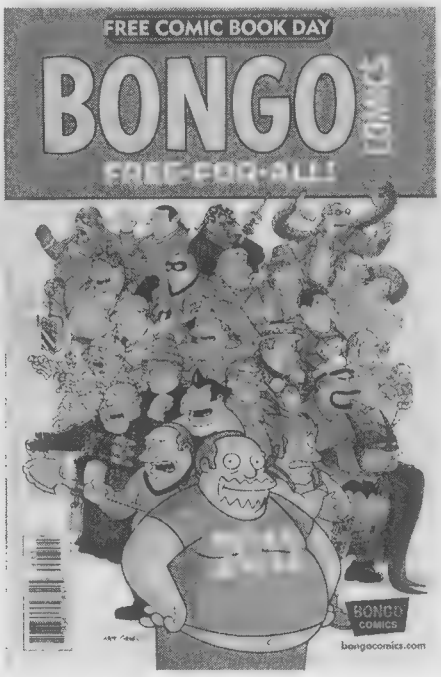
My brother had wanted to check out the *Voltron Force* comic book, and his girlfriend was interested in the *Lady Death* offering. Neither store we went to on May 5 had the books.

On the Bendis Board, I posted in one of the FCBD threads to see if anyone had a copy of each that they were willing to send my way. (I offered to pay postage.)

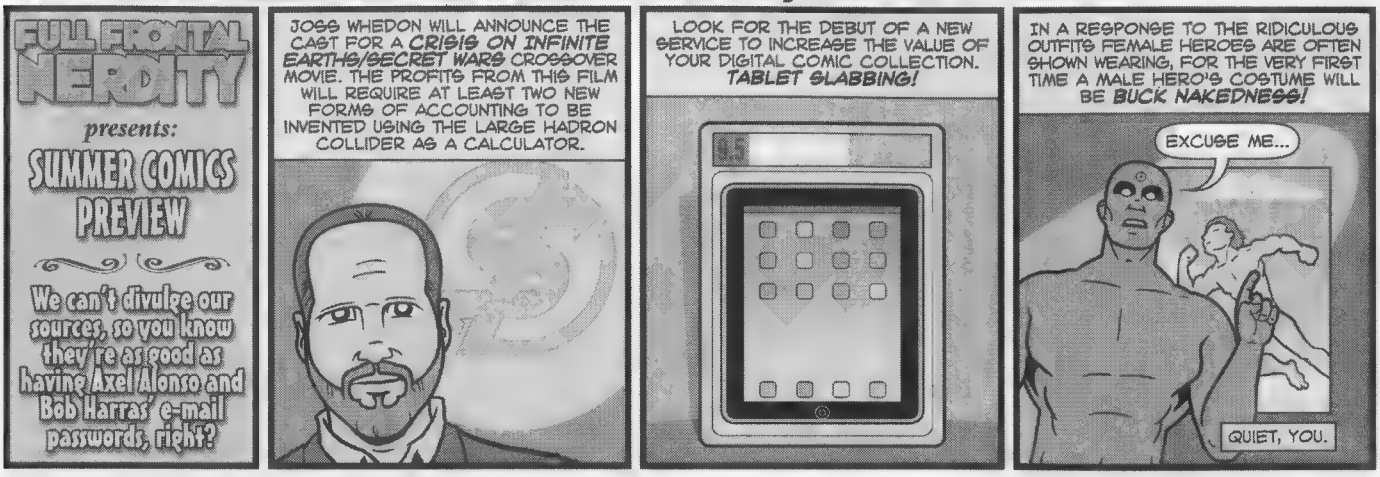
Up to the plate stepped "Artful Angie." I received a message that said AA had the comics in question and would be happy to send them to me. When the package arrived, not only were the two comics in question sent, but also a copy of practically every other FCBD comic book — even ones that I hadn't yet read myself.

I wanted to make sure that I gave a proper shout-out to a wonderful comics fan and say a big "Thank You!" to "Artful Angie!"





FULL FRONTAL NERDITY by Aaron Williams


FULL FRONTAL NERDITY
presents:
SUMMER COMICS PREVIEW
We can't divulge our sources, so you know they're as good as having Axel Alonso and Bob Harras' e-mail passwords, right?
JOSS WHEDON WILL ANNOUNCE THE CAST FOR A CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS/SECRET WARS CROSSOVER MOVIE. THE PROFITS FROM THIS FILM WILL REQUIRE AT LEAST TWO NEW FORMS OF ACCOUNTING TO BE INVENTED USING THE LARGE HADRON COLLIDER AS A CALCULATOR.
LOOK FOR THE DEBUT OF A NEW SERVICE TO INCREASE THE VALUE OF YOUR DIGITAL COMIC COLLECTION. TABLET SLABBING!
IN A RESPONSE TO THE RIDICULOUS OUTFITS FEMALE HEROES ARE OFTEN SHOWN WEARING, FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME A MALE HERO'S COSTUME WILL BE BUCK NAKEDNESS!
EXCUSE ME...
QUIET, YOU.

AVENGERS AWESOMENESS!

Scott C. Beal

Here are a few of my thoughts on *The Avengers*:

The movie — Awesome, just freaking awesome!! It sounded so great that I was expecting to be disappointed, but it lived up to the hype. In fact, it exceeded all hopes that I had.

Iron Man — Tony Stark at his best! His one-liners never failed to get a huge laugh from the audience.

Captain America — Truly a man out of his time. His commanding presence held the team together.

Hulk — His encounter with Loki sent the whole theater through the roof. I'm still laughing over that one!

Thor — He didn't really seem to fit well. Not much interaction with his teammates. But, boy, did he kick butt.

Black Widow — Absolutely fabulous. Pretty much one of the headliners.

Hawkeye — He needed more screen time and more depth to his character.

Nick Fury — As always, an absolute leader. And, surprise, a sense of humor, too.

Loki — Arrogance personified. A great villain.

The "behind the scenes" baddie — No spoilers here, but his appearance during the credits takes the next movie to a much higher level. Cosmic, even!

The Important death – Still no spoilers, but it came as a shock! But there is hope. Earlier in the film, Stark jokingly mentioned a Life Model Decoy (LMD). Maybe the dead could live again?

The Tesseract — Cosmic Cube may sound corny, but it's a lot easier to say (and spell).

The Helicarrier — Awesome!!

I was hoping for a least a *mention* of Hank Pym or Janet van Dyne, but no luck. Hank in any of his identities would be a welcome surprise. So would The Wasp. Maybe next time?

Also found out later that there was one additional scene *after* the credits that I'd missed, darn it.

Maggie: *The moral is one I learned long ago:* ***Always*** *stay through the movie's credits.*

MOM GOES TO THE MOVIES

C.S. Wright

On Mother's Day this year, like any good and dutiful son, I attempted to show mine some of the love and affection she has passed on to my sister and myself, lo, these many years. Almost like a date, we went out to dinner and a movie. Just not in that order. And it wasn't just *any* movie. She wanted to see *The Avengers*. So I took my 83-year-old mom to see the blockbuster event.

A little history is in order here, I think. First, my mother's been reading my comics off and on for a long, long time. She even had her first letter to a comic book (an early, single-digit issue of *Amazing Spider-Man*), published by Marvel! As a kid, then, *I* was the one who was *amazed!* She loved the movie, by the way, even though it was a little loud for her. I had let her know beforehand that that might be the case. With the advent of these super-sound systems, you almost feel as if you're at a rock concert, instead of the movies, these days.

Afterward at dinner, she said she'd been confused about Nick Fury. The Fury she remembered, of course, was a white World War II Army Sergeant who later went on to head up the S.H.I.E.L.D. outfit. I tried to explain about the *other* Universe of Marvel characters under the Ultimate umbrella, created for new-reader access without the historical baggage of the originals. She kind of got it but figured they just wanted Sam Jackson for his popularity. I couldn't really argue with her on that one.

For me personally, this long-awaited movie extravaganza was every bit the 4th of July fireworks and Coney Island Cyclone roller-coaster ride I was looking for — and *then* some! And, while it was *not* without flaws, they were few and in no way took away from my overall enjoyment of this Joss Whedon theatrical marvel.

What helped a lot here for me, prior to actually seeing the movie, was picking up the collected *Avengers* prequel trade paperback. As others put it, "While not essential to the main event, those who read it will come away with a fuller and greater appreciation of the bigger picture," or words to that effect. I found this to be true.

Clearly, the end-of-credits breadcrumbs they tossed us were designed to kick our little fanboy hormones into anticipation overdrive! It worked!

Brent: *Since she lives a couple of hundred miles away, I didn't take my mom to* ***The Avengers*** *for Mother's Day, but she and I* ***did*** *see* ***The Hunger Games*** *together a few weeks ago. Your story reminds me of my folks patiently going to such seminal treats as the first* ***Star Wars*** *film and the first two* ***Superman*** *movies.*

A few years ago, my parents, wife, son, and I all went to ***Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*** *at the same hometown theater in which I'd seen those earlier films. There's something about going there that takes me back in time. It falls somewhere between a first- and second-run theater, and the prices are kept reasonable ($3 per person) along with the concessions. The theater has just upgraded to a digital projection system and will offer 3-D*

movies but allow patrons to purchase their glasses once and bring them back for later shows: a practice I'd like to see other venues adopt.

MOVIE WISHES AND TRIVIA

Richard M. Brown
2326 Cabot
Detroit, MI 48209

With the success of Marvel's *Avengers* movie, fans want a *Justice League* movie. Marvel has even had *Elektra* and *Howard the Duck*. Someone at DC Entertainment *must* be able to put a *Justice League* movie together.

So, what would happen if Lex Luthor met J.R. Ewing?

It happened in *Superman: The Movie*. Lex Luthor (Gene Hackman) put Miss Teschmacher (Valerie Perrine) in the road, the apparent victim of an automobile accident. Shortly before he took his villainous turn on Dallas, Larry Hagman played the military officer who came upon the "accident" and offered to give Miss Teschmacher mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Brent: *Various Justice League films have been suggested over the years and, considering how bad the made-for-TV version of nearly 20 years ago was, perhaps DC is making sure it's got everything absolutely right this time?*

The good news is that the rights for the characters are all held by Warner Bros., so getting necessary clearances should be much easier.

Finally, wouldn't it have been fun if NASA had loaned Major Nelson to the Army for ***Superman: The Movie****?*

Above: Valerie Perrine as Miss Teschmacher poses as an accident victim in *Superman: The Movie*. Presumably, Larry Hagman as a military officer is somewhere in that group of men.

TONY'S BACK PAGE

Tony Isabella

Marge's Lulu and Tubby in Japan

Marge's Lulu and Tubby in Japan (Dell, Jul 62) is the latest treasure to emerge from my Vast Accumulation of Stuff. I probably bought it via eBay, intrigued by the title characters going to one of the countries I would most like to visit.

The creative team of John Stanley (writer and possibly layouts) and Irving Tripp (pencils and inks) is one of the most underrated teams in comics history. They blended their strengths so well that their many collaborations feel like the work of a single creator.

In this one-shot, Lulu's efficiency-expert father is hired by a toy company in Japan to advise on their latest item, which they believe will appeal to American children. Lulu's dad invites her and her friends to join him, thinking they will be helpful in testing this new toy.

Spoiler warning!

The lead-up to this invitation is hilarious, as Lulu and her friends open fortune cookies. Every cookie has the same fortune: that the person holding it will be taking a trip. Lulu is ready to complain to the fortune-cookie factory that the box is defective until her dad springs his big news on her.

End spoiler warning.

The rest of the issue's several stories touch on various aspects of Japanese society — kimonos, rice fields, kites — but focus more on humorous situations than facts. It's a different approach than we saw in those great Dennis the Menace travel specials, but every bit as entertaining.

The big finish and one of the funniest stories in this comic book has Lulu and the kids testing the new toy. Some of the humor comes from Lulu's dad and the toy makers having quite different notions of how to market the toy. From cover to cover, this 36-page issue is a delight and worth searching for in the back-issue bins.

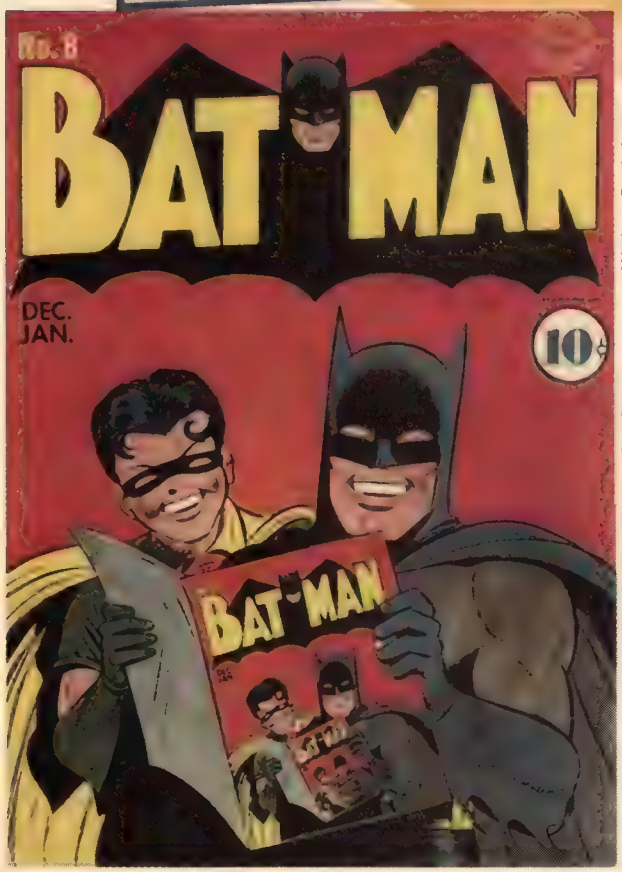
TOP 10 FAVORITE COMIC BOOK COVERS

CHOSEN BY JOHN AND SUSAN BONNER

John and Susan Bonner have owned and operated Halley's Comics in Ft. Collins, Colo., since 1988. According to John, "Halley's is an unusual comic book store, in that it sells only comics. Old comics, new comics, black and white, color, or collected. No games, pop culture or even cards; if it isn't comics-related, it's not there.

"When Halley's was started, friends, competitors, and distributors alike suggested diversification, because you couldn't make it on comics alone. Amazingly, 25 years later, that crazy idea of a single-product physical comic-book store is still a viable business."

John and Susan were introduced by their high-school Latin teacher Mrs. Gott. John has collected comics, especially *Legion of Super-Heroes* and *Doctor Strange*, since his first childhood in the 1950s-60s. He also collects science-fiction books and magazines, synthesizers, and Sun Ra and Frank Zappa music — and raises bonsais. Susan said she loves *Groo* and any Sergio Aragonés' project; she also collects mysteries, enjoys gardening and making stained-glass windows and objects, and loves traditional jazz. They both collect cats, art, and way too much random debris. Another of their specialties is infinity covers.



Batman #8 © 1941 National Periodical Publications; art by Fred Ray; scan courtesy of Heritage Comic Auctions

***Batman* #8 (Jan 42).** *"Fred Ray's iconic cover is one of the earliest and probably the most famous of the comic-book infinity covers. A truly beautiful book."*

Orig. price: 10¢ Current NM price: $7,500

Polly Pigtails #1 © 1945 Parents Magazine; scan courtesy of Heritage Comic Auctions

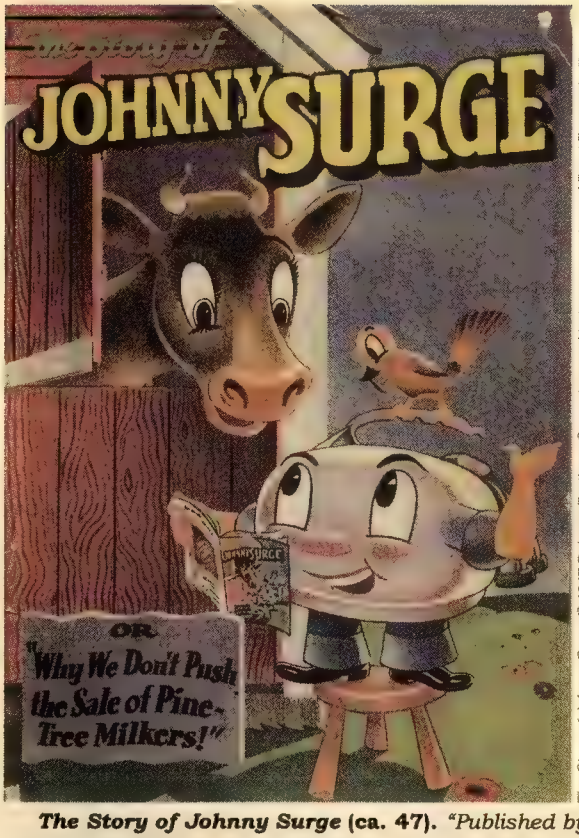
Polly Pigtails* #1 (Jan 46).** *"Strangely, the interior version of the story on the folded-over comic you see on the cover has the top two panels you see, but the lower one differs. The series was published by* ***Parents Magazine."

Orig. price: 10¢ Current NM price: $200

Superman-Tim (Feb 47) © 1947 National Periodical Publications; art uncredited; scan courtesy of John Bonner

***Superman-Tim* (Feb 47).** *"Here is an example of a simple drawing making a nice infinity cover. The Superman-Tim comics were produced from 1942 through 1950 for businesses to give away. This copy came from The Boy's and Student's Shop in Burlingame, Calif. This is another hard one to find."*

Orig. price: Free Current NM price: $385



The Story of Johnny Surge © 1947 Babson Brothers Co.; art uncredited; scan courtesy of Brent Frankenhoff

***The Story of Johnny Surge* (ca. 47).** *"Published by the Babson Brothers Co. in Chicago to help market its 'Surge' line of milking machines, this book features a walking-talking milking machine and is truly one of the strangest comics ever made."*

Orig. price: Free Current NM price: $750

Three Stooges #1 © 1949 respective copyright holder; art by Norman Maurer; scan courtesy of Heritage Comic Auctions

***Three Stooges* #1 (Feb 49).** *"Published by Jubilee, this comic is listed in* **Overstreet** *as scarce and it is. If you want a copy, expect to look for a while. The cover is a great example of one of the most common approaches to infinity covers: the newsstand. We could probably do a Top 10 newsstand/infinity covers."*

Orig. price: 10¢ Current NM price: $1,800

Riot #4 © 1954 Magazine Management; art by Joe Maneely; scan courtesy of Heritage Comic Auctions

***Riot* #4 (Feb 54).** *"Joe Maneely's wonderful composition and technique on this classic sight gag makes a great cover on this Atlas-era Marvel comic."*

Orig. price: 10¢ Current NM price: $360

Adventures of the Big Boy #69 © 1962 Big Boy Restaurants; art uncredited; scan courtesy of John Jackson Miller

***Adventures of the Big Boy* #69 (ca. 62)** *"Originally created by (no kidding) Stan Lee and Bill Everett in1956 for the restaurant chain, the Big Boy still has new adventures produced by Craig Yoe's studio."*

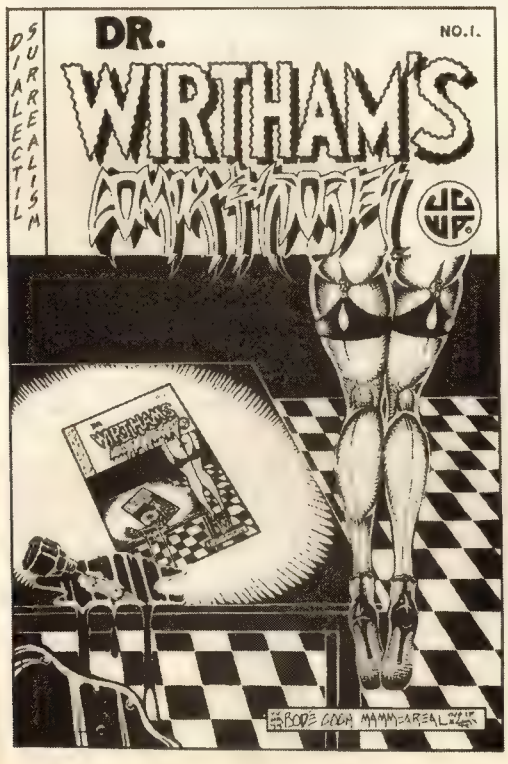
Orig. Price: Free Current NM price: $16

STRANGE ADVENTURES
12¢
A 2-PART THRILLER...
"The CREATURE from STRANGE ADVENTURES!"
THIS MAGAZINE HAS A STORY ALL ABOUT ME AND A WEIRD BEAST--THE SAME BEAST THAT'S BEEN PURSUING ME SINCE THIS MORNING!

Strange Adventures#64 © 1964 National Periodical Publications; art by Dick Dillin and Sheldon Moldoff; scan courtesy of Maggie Thompson

***Strange Adventures* #170 (Nov 64).** *"A contest in this issue offered the art from the story's two chapters as prizes to readers who came up with the best explanation for the story which involves the comic itself."*

Orig. price: 12¢ Current NM price: $100



Dr. Wirtham's Comix & Stories #1 © 1975 Clifford Neal; art by Neal, aka Oisif Egaux. Scan courtesy of Heritage Comic Auctions.

***Dr. Wirtham's Comix & Stories* #1 (Jan 76).** *"Published by Clifford Neal, who also wrote and drew it as Oisif Egaux. Neal writes, 'I like to draw the stuff Dr. Wertham loved to hate.' Great goal for a '70s underground and this cover is a good start."*

Orig. price: $1 Current NM price: $6

Action Comics #500 © 1979 DC; art by Ross Andru and Dick Giordano; scan courtesy of Brent Frankenhoff

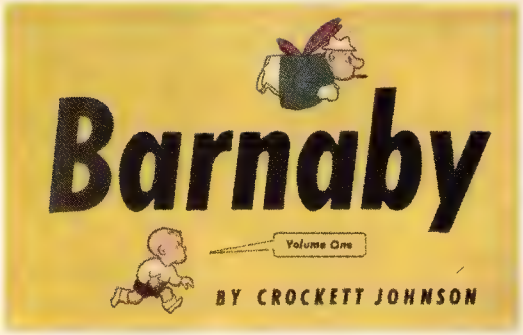
Action Comics* #500 (Oct 79).** *"The full-color logo and the Superman, Supergirl, and Lois trio in front of the pink and white retrospective of* ***Action *covers make this Ross Andru and Dick Giordano cover visually striking."*

Orig. price: $1 Current NM price: $12

At the risk of overselling a classic, I can't restrain myself ...

Barnaby's back! Cushlamochree!

by **MAGGIE THOMPSON**



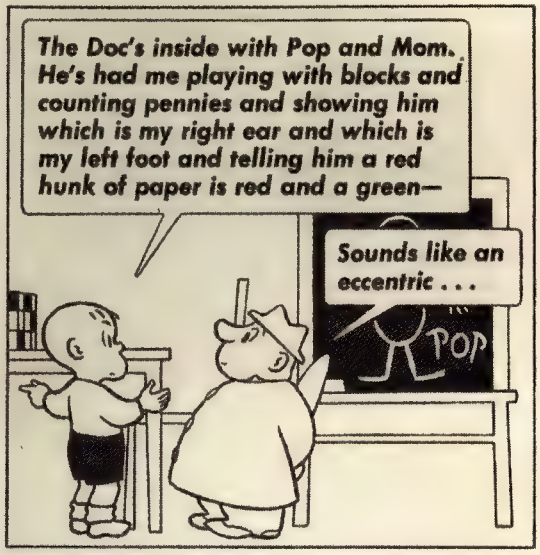
Barnaby **by Crockett Johnson (David Leisk, 1906-1975). Fantagraphics. Edited by Eric Reynolds and Philip Nel. $35 hardcover, 336 pages. (Nel is author of *Crockett Johnson and Ruth Krauss: How an Unlikely Couple Found Love, Dodged the FBI, and Transformed Children's Literature*.)**

It won't be long now. Though pushed back from its originally announced release date of April 2012, the first volume of Fantagraphics' complete collection of Crockett Johnson's *Barnaby* strips will be released before year's end. And what I want to say here is that it's a classic strip of which the majority of comic-strip fans have probably never heard. But they should order it without delay. I realize there's a danger of over-promoting this project, so that the finest work ever published could not live up to it. It's not super-heroes. It's not "Good Girl Art." It's just entrancing, selected by Stephen Becker in his 1959 *Comic Art in America* as one of the classics in the wrap-up chapter as one of "The Lyric Clowns" that made comics great.

Let me put it another way — by quoting a few celebrities who have commented on the strip over the years. In alphabetical order, then:

William Rose Benét (1886-1950, poet, writer, editor) "No American home should be without a copy of *Barnaby*. It is a classic of humor, and Mr. O'Malley, Barnaby's fairy godfather is a character to live with the Mad Hatter, the White Rabbit, Ferdinand, and all great creatures of fantasy. An inimitable book, a pictorial delight."

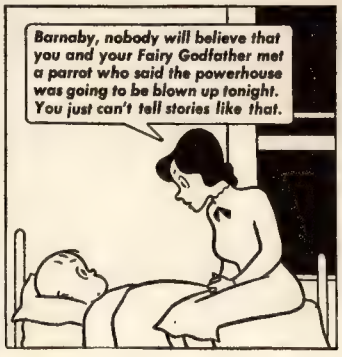
Milton Caniff (1907-1988 creator of *Terry and the Pirates*, *Steve Canyon*) "Required reading for anyone who wishes to keep in proper touch with the wonderful half-world of the 'little people.' "

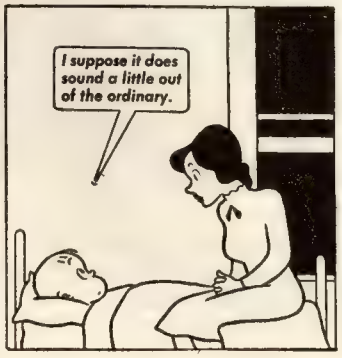

The Doc's inside with Pop and Mom. He's had me playing with blocks and counting pennies and showing him which is my right ear and which is my left foot and telling him a red hunk of paper is red and a green—
Sounds like an eccentric . . .
POP

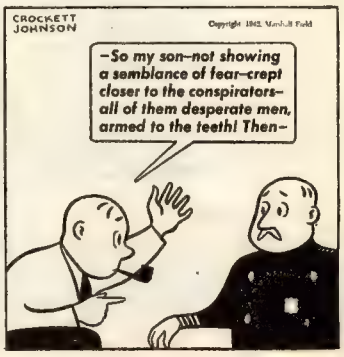
Norman Corwin (1910-2011, writer, screenwriter, producer, teacher) "I have been after Radio to make a program of *Barnaby* and after the Movies to make a picture and after the Postmaster General to make a *Barnaby* Stamp, so naturally I am glad to see that Henry Holt has taken the initiative in putting the first collection of O'Malleiana in permanent form."

Jim Davis (1945-, *Garfield* creator) "*Barnaby* is a wonderfully gentle and imaginative story. Very rarely does a cartoon piece display such loving care on the part of its creator. Crockett Johnson's simple line rendering and classic story sense make *Barnaby* an

I should have liked to hear your young hero tell how he discovered the bomb plot.
I think I can give you the gist of his story, Chief.


Barnaby, nobody will believe that you and your Fairy Godfather met a parrot who said the powerhouse was going to be blown up tonight. You just can't tell stories like that.




CROCKETT JOHNSON
–So my son–not showing a semblance of fear–crept closer to the conspirators– all of them desperate men, armed to the teeth! Then–

BARNABY #1
by CROCKETT JOHNSON
Wanted: A Fairy Godfather
BARNABY #2
by CROCKETT JOHNSON
Mr. O'Malley and the Haunted House
Gosh, Mr. O'Malley. If your friend Gus here didn't make those lights appear in that old house, who did?
Oh dear.
It's still a mystery. We must continue my investigation.
BARNABY #3
by CROCKETT JOHNSON
Jackeen J. O'Malley For Congress
Tippecanoe & O'MALLEY Too
KEEP COOL WITH O'MALLEY
O'MALLEY TO JUST AROUND THE CORNER
16 TO
BARNABY #4
by CROCKETT JOHNSON
Mr. O'Malley Goes for the Gold
An old Spanish duralumin coffer!
Is it really full of gold? It seems kind of light
BARNABY #5
by CROCKETT JOHNSON
Mr. O'Malley, Wizard of Wall Street
If, and sometimes I doubt it, your parents actually do exist, I cannot but conclude they're avoiding me! Coincidence can go only so far . . . If I'm wrong, they can contact me at the club . . . I am leaving, m'boy!
But, gosh!
BARNABY #6
by CROCKETT JOHNSON
J.J. O'Malley Goes Hollywood
Lana Turner. Hedy Lamarr. Even Olivia de Haviland would do. Your Fairy Godfather, m'boy, has the situation well under control.

entertaining feature, not just from a historic point of view but for today as well."

W.C. Fields (1880-1946, comedian, actor, juggler, writer) "*Barnaby* is a whiz."

Ron Goulart (1933-, historian and mystery, fantasy, science-fiction writer) "What Johnson seemed to be saying was that to a child the world is a much more marvelous and wonderful place than adults notice it to be. That he did this without being sticky and fey is one of the triumphs of *Barnaby*."

Bil Keane (1922-2011, *Family Circus* creator) "Given the choice I would much prefer J.J. O'Malley as my cigar-smoking godfather over Don Corleone. Barnaby and his legendary crew are truly classic American whimsy."

Rockwell Kent (1882-1971, painter, printmaker, graphic-novel pioneer, writer) "I yield to no one in my what Charles Fisher has called 'blathering admiration' of Barnaby. I have no doubt that the reasons for *Barnaby*'s appeal are to be found in Crockett Johnson's profound understanding of the psychology of the child, of grown-ups and of fairy godfathers. But I am content to just get sheer delight from him."

Ruth McKenney (1911-1972, journalist, author of *My Sister Eileen*] "I don't know any way to talk of Mr. O'Malley without sounding coy. I've tried it often on strangers to *Barnaby* and they always regard me with a sour look. They don't get the idea at all until they actually run across that evil intentioned, vain, pompous, wonderful little man with the wings. They soften up, then, automatically. I suppose Mr. O'Malley has fewer morals than any other character in literature which is, of course, what makes him so fascinating. ... Colossal, magnificent, terrific, marvelous, wonderful, witty, funny ... take your pick."

Charles Schulz (*Peanuts* creator) "*Barnaby* was one of the great comic strips of all time."

Frank Sullivan (1892-1976, humorist) "*Barnaby* is about the best ever and no two ways about it."

Louis Untermeyer (1885-1977, poet, anthologist, critic, editor) "Barnaby and his attendant sprites are the funniest high comedy characters since Aristophanes and Thurber. I was tempted to say that Crockett Johnson had created a metropolitan *Midsummer Night's Dream* except that Johnson's elves, ghosts, leprechauns, and gnomes are much more plausible and persuasive than Shakespeare's. The book is one of the most completely seductive books of humor I have ever enjoyed."

The first of the Del Rey mass-market paperbacks contained a brief introduction by Publisher Judy-Lynn del Rey:

"The Publisher wishes to thank her husband Lester del Rey for introducing her to Barnaby and Mr. O'Malley; Scott Meredith, the agent who always delivers, and his capable lieutenants, Jack Scovil and Jonathan Silverman; Bill Blackbeard, Director of the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, who worked long and hard to provide us with copies of the original artwork; Don and Maggie Thompson for getting the word out; Ron Goulart for his enthusiastic support; Sidney Kramer of Mews Books, Ltd., who agreed to Agree; and to all the fans who answered our query with wild and enthusiastic cries of, 'Yes, bring back BARNABY! Do it! Do it!'"

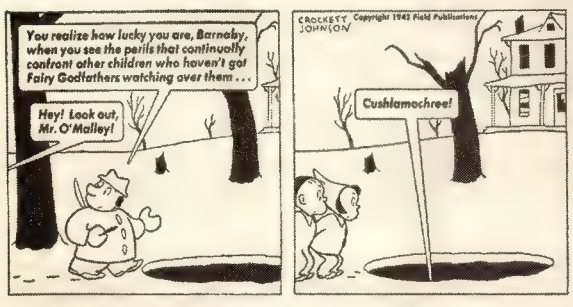

You realize how lucky you are, Barnaby, when you see the perils that continually confront other children who haven't got Fairy Godfathers watching over them . . .
Hey! Look out, Mr. O'Malley!
CROCKETT JOHNSON Copyright 1942 Field Publications
Cushlamochree!

Photo © 2012 Maggie Thompson

MAGGIE THOMPSON admires the adventures of Barnaby and other active, imaginative kids. So it was a delight to receive Flat Devon in the mail. (If you don't know about Jeff Brown and the Flat Stanley project based on his book, *www.flatstanley.com* has the details.) You can join the discussion via *CBGXtra.com* or *Oh, So?* Maggie's website is *www.maggiethompson.com*, and she Tweets as *ThompsonMaggie*.

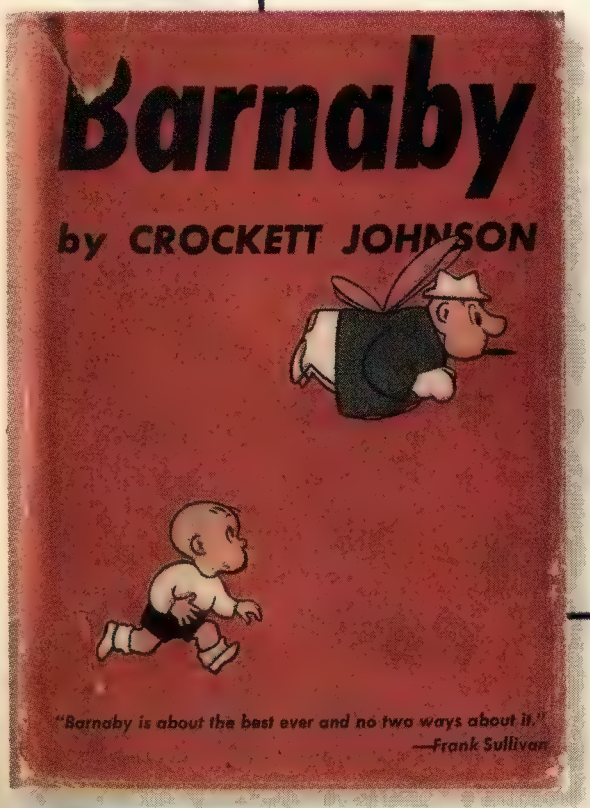
The Del Rey Volume 4 contained this letter from DOROTHY PARKER (1893-1967, poet, author, critic, and satirist). It originally appeared in *PM* for Oct. 3, 1943, on release of the original hardcover.

I cannot write a review of Crockett Johnson's book of Barnaby. I have tried and tried, but it never comes out a book review. It is always a valentine for Mr. Johnson.

For a bulky segment of a century, I have been an avid follower of comic strips — all comic strips; this is a statement made with approximately the same amount of pride with which one would say, "I've been shooting cocaine into my arm for the past 25 years." I cannot remember how the habit started, and I am certainly unable to explain why it persists. I know only that I'm hooked, by now, that's all. I can't stop. I even take a certain unspeakable tabloid for its strips, though, when I am caught with it on my doorstep, I still have shame enough left to try to laugh matters off by explaining that you really ought to know what your enemies are up to. When I will tell you that I am in daily touch with the horrible, sightless Orphan Annie — who, I am convinced, is Westbrook Pegler's adopted child — that I keep up with the particular nasty experiences of Dick Tracy, that even, for heaven's sake, I was the one who strung along with Deathless Deer until her mercy killing, you will know that Mother is a gone pigeon. When cornered, I try to make rather doggy excuses. I say that comic strips are important pieces of Americana. But it doesn't hold, you know. You cannot class the relationship between Flash Gordon and Dale as something peculiarly American. I flatly do not know why I do as I do. For I do not enjoy the strips. I read them solemnly and sourly, and there is no delight in me because of them.

That is, I had no delight and no enjoyment and no love until Barnaby came. I suppose you must do it this way; I suppose you must file Barnaby under comic strips, because his biography runs along in strip form in a newspaper. I bow to convention in the matter. But, privately, if the adventures of Barnaby constitute a comic strip, then so do those of Huckleberry Finn.

I think, and I am trying to talk calmly, that Barnaby and his friends and oppressors are the most important additions to American arts and letters in Lord knows how many years. I know that they are the most important additions to my heart. I love Barnaby, I love little Jane, I love Gus, the Ghost, I hate and admire and envy Mr. O'Malley, above all I love Gorgon, the dog.



I think the conception of a dog who talks — "Didn't know I could do it; never tried it before, I guess" — and then turns out to be such a crashing bore that they have to lock him away so they won't be obliged to listen to him, is — well, it's only glorious, that's all. You have to love dogs before you can go on to the step of taking them down, understandingly. I think Mr. Johnson must love dogs. I think Mr. Johnson must love people. I know darned well I must love Mr. Johnson.

Barnaby is fine to have in book form — you can't go on, you know, cutting strips out of PM and meaning to paste them in an album the next rainy day. The book will be invaluable to those who must read aloud a while every evening. I am told, by those fortunates who own them, that children love Barnaby; which information has appreciably raised my estimate of children. While for adults — I can only say Barnaby, the book, costs $2. If you have $5, save out three for the landlord and spend the remainder to feed your soul.

Well, I told you I couldn't write anything but a valentine, didn't I?

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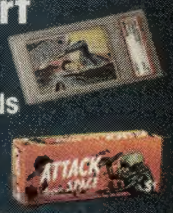

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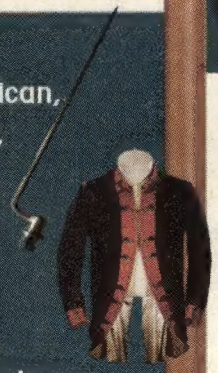

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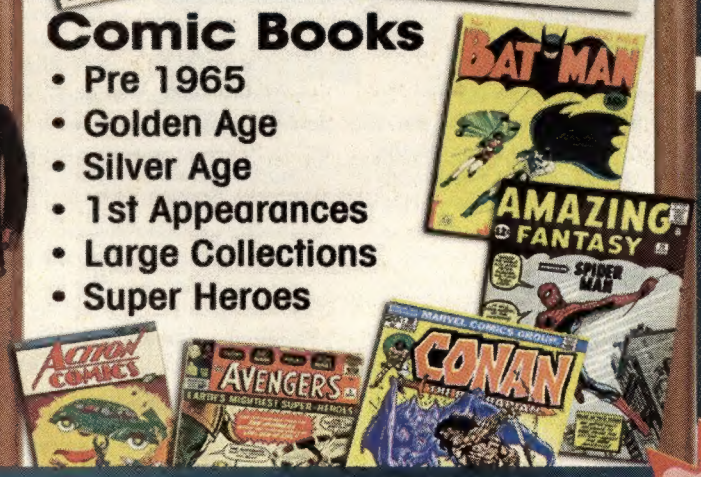

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No Collection Too Big or Small

Does familiarity breed contempt?

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing

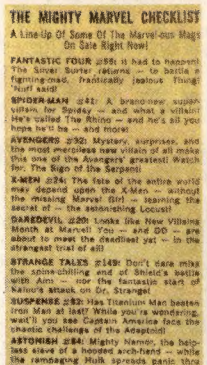
by **PETER DAVID**

We're gonna have to rub him out. He knows too much.
— Any of hundreds of detective films

This issue of ***CBG*** is supposed to be the preview of upcoming comics events. Events that we can be reasonably sure will be picked apart, analyzed, discussed, dissected, and embraced or dissed and dismissed. Much will be made of whatever shreds of information the companies choose to provide, and fans will pontificate at length over how something is either going to suck or kick butt.

Sometimes I think that, when it comes to comics promotion — or even promotion in general — familiarity breeds contempt.

See, here's the thing. When I was a young comics fan, we didn't have computers. All we had (aside from fanzines) was the comics themselves and such editorial matter as Marvel's *Bullpen Bulletins* and the comics letters pages where the editors and publishers doled out information by the teaspoon and assured us that fantastic things were coming up, just you wait and see!


THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

A Line-Up Of Some Of The Marvel-ous Mags On Sale Right Now!

FANTASTIC FOUR #58: It had to happen! The Silver Surfer returns — to battle a fighting-mad, frantically jealous Thing! "Nuff said!

SPIDER-MAN #41: A brand-new, super-villain for Spidey — and what a villain! He's called The Rhino — and he's all you hope he'll be — and more!

AVENGERS #32: Mystery, surprises, and the most merciless new villain of all make this one of the Avengers' greatest! Watch for The Rigo of the Serpent!

X-MEN #24: The fate of the entire world may depend upon the X-Men — without the missing Marvel Girl — learning the secret of — the astonishing Locust!

DAREDEVIL #30: Looks like New Villains Month at Marvel! You — and DD — are about to meet the deadliest yet — in the strangest trial of all!

STRANGE TALES #149: Don't dare miss the spine-chilling end of Shield's battle with Aim — nor the fantastic start of Kaluu's attack on Dr. Strange!

SUSPENSE #32: Has Titanium Man beaten Iron Man at last? While you're wondering, won't you see Captain America face the chaotic challenge of the Adaptoid!

ASTONISH #54: Mighty Namor, the heir-less slave of a hooded arch-fiend — while the rampaging Hulk spreads panic thru the streets of New York!

SGT. FURY #34: Have you ever wondered how Fury, Capt. Sawyer, and Dum Dum first got together? If so, this action-packed thriller is just for you!

MARVEL COLLECTORS' ITEM CLASSICS #8: Greater than ever! The F.F.! Iron Man! Dr. Strange! The Incredible Hulk! The Watcher! Howzat?

MARVEL TALES #46: The most marvelous line-up yet — Spider-Man! Thor! Ant-Man! And the Human Torch!

FANTASY MASTERPIECES #4: More Golden Age Thrills with Captain America, plus the greatest fantasy epics of all!

THOR KING-SIZE SPECIAL #2: Brand new! The indestructible Destroyer returns to battle Volstagg, Hogun, Fandral, Balder, the cream of Asgard's might — and finally — the God of Thunder himself! Never before such senses-staggering spectacle! Plus two of our most requested Thor reprints!

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES KING-SIZE SPECIAL #2: The Origin of Daredevil! The Original Avengers vs. the Space Phantom! And, the biggest sensation of all — from Marvel's Golden Age — the Original Human Torch battles the Original Sub-Mariner! Plus: the first comic mag yarn ever! Start ever, world! Hoos Boy!

There's a Hebrew song that's closely associated with Passover, transliterated as "Dayenu." The entire thrust of the song is that, if God had done just so much and no more for the Jews, then that would have been enough for us. It's the Jewish equivalent of one of those infomercials that keep shouting, "But wait! There's more!"

So, when I was a kid, if we just had the comics, then *dayenu*. Because we loved the stories and loved the characters. But wait! We had editorial matter whetting our appetites for upcoming stuff! *Dayenu!* But wait! Marvel started doing its own conventions! *Dayenu!* But wait! Marvel editorial started showing up at other conventions and talking to us about forthcoming plans! *Dayenu!*

But wait! As the direct market developed, comic-book companies started providing retailers detailed information as to upcoming storylines. And, as time passed, the information started going out to them earlier and earlier.

But at least it was all *retailer-exclusive* information that they used purely for ordering guidance.

But then the spoiler-filled catalogs started being published and distributed. And then they started being reprinted on the Internet. So now it was "*Nu!* Too *much*, already!"

Too late.

With the overabundance of information, we are now at the point at which publishers have no choice but to feed the beast.

The meticulous control that publishers used to have over dissemination of material and its general discussion is long gone. Of course, you can make the argument that that's to the benefit of comics, because the more people talking about upcoming work — even if they're trashing it — the better it serves to heighten awareness. Which I might accept, if sales were much higher than they used to be instead of much lower.

Being surprised by upcoming events — the kind of existence that used to be standard for comics fans — is long gone. People can shout "Spoilers!" all they want, but publishers that put total lockdown on information would be considered somehow remiss in their obligations to the fans. A few years ago, I asked people to keep their mouths shut about key story elements in *X-Factor*, and many did — but others went out of their way to blab as much as they could.

Because people are no longer content to simply wait and see. Everyone has to have inside information and everyone has to be the first out there with an advance opinion. Doesn't matter if the opinion is based on incomplete information: Speed is the key. Which is why idiots with cell phones leaked lousy on-set pictures of Heath Ledger in Joker makeup and why idiots with opinions saw them and declared that Ledger's Joker was going to be a disaster. A brilliant, Oscar-winning disaster.

And, while we're on the subject of movies, when did daily updates on box office become *de rigueur*? The press declares a movie a flop after a single weekend, and audiences decide not to bother, because, if other people aren't going, it must not be worthwhile.

Yet the beast must be fed, so movie producers now "leak" their own photos, like Robert Downey as Tony Stark looking at an array of armor or Angelina Jolie beautifully menacing as Malificent. And comics fans aren't satisfied until they know every major story beat for the next six months.

It's just that there's something to be said — for things not being said.

PETER DAVID, can be followed on Twitter (***peterdavid_pad***), visited at his website at ***www.peterdavid.net***, or written to at P.O. Box 239, Bayport, NY 11705. His book, ***Writing for Comics and Graphic Novels with Peter David***, is available from F+W's Impact imprint at ***www.impact-books.com***.

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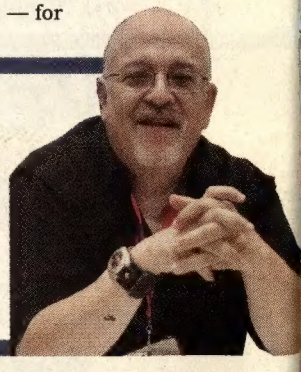

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SPP1319	13⅛ × 19⅛″	1.5	No	BOPP	—	5.75	9.35	14.80
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KCB28LOA	11⅜ × 17⅛″	.028″	—	21.25	37.50	58.00
KCB40LOA	11⅜ × 17⅛″	.040″	—	41.25	74.75	107.00
KAF281319	13 × 19″	.028″	—	27.50	47.70	75.00
KAF401319	13 × 19¼″	.040″	$28.00	56.25	97.50	170.00

Grades

Economy: 0.030″ thick pH neutral chipboard. White on one side. Use for short-term storage.

Standard Acid-Free: 0.028″ thick acid-free cardboard. White on both sides. Use for long-term storage.

Super Acid-Free: 0.040″ thick 100% alpha-cellulose board. Off-white. Acid-free (alkaline pH 8.5), lignin-free, contaminant-free. Suitable for conservation. 3% calcium carbonate buffer imparts excellent aging characteristics. Meets Library of Congress Archival Standards for indefinite storage.

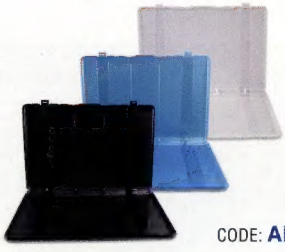
Storage & Display

Original Art Binders

Outside: 19¼ × 13 × 1⅛″

These fully-enclosed binders are single-injection molded and are made from archival safe polypropylene, including the durable poly rings that hold the binder pages. Dual locking clasps securely keep binder closed. No outer sleeve. Case holds 11 × 17″ pages (A11117P sold separately). Available in **clear**, **black**, or **blue**.

▲ *Specify color when ordering.*



1	$14.00
2	22.50
5	46.75
11	89.85
22	162.80

CODE: **AB3R1117▲**

Original Art Binder Pages

12 × 18″ with pocket for 11 × 17″ sheet. 3.5 mil polypropylene. Use with binder AB3R1117.

25	$19.00
50	35.00
100	66.00
250	157.50

CODE: **A1117PP**

Presentation Books

These presentation books are archival quality. Excellent for storing, carrying, and presenting artwork, photos, and prints. The covers are made from durable 60 point polypropylene with stitched nylon fabric edges. Each book has twenty-four 1.5 mil, polyester, double-sided pages (48 views), and a 100% acid-free, black, 4.5 mil polyester insert. Books are water- and stain-resistant.

Code	Book Size	Page Size	Price per Quantity 1	3	5	10	20
AARTBK810	9¼ × 11½ × ¾″	8½ × 10⅜″	$6.10	$16.90	$26.70	$51.20	$ 96.80
AARTBK911	9¾ × 12½ × ¾″	9 × 11¼″	6.75	19.50	30.80	58.50	110.00
AARTBK912	10¼ × 13½ × ¾″	9¼ × 12⅛″	7.50	21.75	34.25	65.00	124.00
AARTBK1114	12⅜ × 15⅜ × 1″	11½ × 14⅛″	13.20	32.90	47.60	86.90	165.00
AARTBK1117	12⅜ × 18¼ × 1″	11½ × 17⅛″	16.50	43.80	63.30	115.50	220.00
AARTBK1319	14 × 20 × 1″	13 × 19¼″	18.15	48.00	69.75	127.00	240.00
AARTBK1417	15⅜ × 18 × 1″	13½ × 17⅛″	17.80	48.75	77.50	147.50	280.00

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